MAY-JUNE

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Polyhedron™

NEWSZINE

RPGA™ NETWORK

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Conventions

Glathricon '90, June 8-10
The 7th annual Glathricon gaming convention will be held at the Executive Inn in Evansville, IN. Steve Jackson, of Steve Jackson Games, is the guest of honor. Other guests include artist Lucy Synk, Jean Rabe, and Skip Williams. Network tournaments include AD&D® game Feature, Masters, Grand Masters, and Joe Martin Benefit and many others. Admission is $20. For information and registration forms write: Evansville Gaming Guild, P.O. Box 15414, Evansville, IN 47716, or call 812-477-9508.

SAGA, June 9-11
SAGA is moving to Glebe High School in Sydney, Australia this year, and promises to be better than ever. Events include Network AD&D game and other tournaments. There also will be Call of Cthulhu, miniatures, board games, and freeforms. Registration covers entry into events. For more information, write to: SAGA, P.O. Box 71, Kingsway, NSW, Australia, 2208.

Madison Game Day, June 10
Network tournaments are among the featured games at this one-day gaming event held at the Washington Ave. Ramada Inn in Madison, WI. War games and miniatures are offered, too. For information contact Nick Klapper, 1909 Heath Ave., Madison, WI 53704.

Polycon 8, June 22-24
Several Network events are featured at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, CA. For more information, contact John Kuskers, Box 168 APC, Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407.

Origins, June 28-July 1
This major gaming event will be held at the Atlanta Hilton and Towers in Atlanta, GA. Guests of honor include Tom Clancy and Doug Niles. Several Network events are planned, including a Grand Masters competition. Other activities include strategic, miniature, and computer game tournaments, open gaming, panels, workshops, and more. Information; send SASE to: ORIGINS '90, Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362.

Crawley Fest-Con 90, June 30
A gaming convention will be part of the annual Crawley Festival in Crawley, England. A Network tournament will be among the featured activities. For more information, contact Crawley Fest-Con, 36 Deerswood Road West Green, Crawley, England, West Sussex, RH117JN.

QuinCon V, July 13-15
Network events, including a special memorial tournament for the hemophilia fund, are among the activities at this gaming feast at the Rodeway Inn in Quincy, IL. There also will be war games and board games. For information, send a SASE to QuinCon V, 3632 Maine Street, Quincy, IL 62301, or call 217-224-3415 or 217-223-8498. Attendees receive special rates at the hotel.

COSCON 90, July 13-15
Network tournaments are among the featured activities at this three-day gaming extravaganza held at Slippery Rock University in Slippery Rock, PA. For information, contact Dave Schnur, 127 Crosslands Road, Butler, PA 16001.

Dovercon VI, July 14-15
This year Dovercon will be held at the University of New Hampshire. Features include Network AD&D game tournaments, a film festival, and miniatures and art competitions. Pre-registration until May 5 is $10, thereafter the cost is $15 for the weekend. For information, write to: Dovercon VI, P.O. Box 753, Dover, NH 03820.

GEN CON® Game Fair, August 9-12
More than three dozen Network events are offered at this gaming giant. Other activities include a members meeting the night before the convention, a Network Breakfast, and an awards ceremony. The many events include board games, war games, miniatures, an art show, auction, huge dealers' area, and a masquerade. The Game Fair will be held at the MECCA Convention Center in Milwaukee, WI. For pre-registration forms write to: 1990 GEN CON Game Fair HQ, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Classifieds

Illinois Seeking adventure group in the southwest Chicago area. I play the AD&D game, D&D® game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, GAMMA WORLD® game, and BOOT HILL® game. Contact Andrew Zambrzycki Jr., 6067 S. 75th Ct., Summit, IL 60501, or call 708-563-2344.

Illinois Seeking AD&D game players in Waukegan/Deerfield area. College age and older preferred. I am 27 years old, an experienced player, and wish to join a group. Contact Dan Ceretto, 502 Lakehurst RD. #2R, Waukegan, IL 60085.

MASSACHUSETTS Wanted: An AD&D game group. I have played the game for three years. I have played many other RPGs, but I am mainly interested in the AD&D game. I'm a 15-year-old DM. Please write to: Josh Paulson, 67 Ridge R, Upton, MA 01568.

Indiana I need AD&D game players. I am willing to play others. I am a 15-year-old DM. All ages are welcome. Contact Chuck North at 1207 Riley Ct., LaPorte, IN 46350.

Texas Serious and dedicated 15-year-old AD&D game player looking for a group to join. Also collects DRAGONLANCE® game products. Contact Tom Conlon, 16314 Sunset Valley Dr., Dallas, TX 75248, phone 214-733-0508.

General Gamer in the badlands looking for a pen pal from anywhere. My main interest is the Paranoia game, though I have extensive experience in the D&D® game, AD&D game, Car Wars, MERP, Rolemaster, and others. I've been playing RPGs for seven years. All letters will be answered. Aaron Goldblatt, 3605 Wharton, Ft. Worth, TX 76133.

General If you prefer the original AD&D game and are interested in sharing opinions and ideas, please contact me: Alan Block, Box 922, 700 College St., Beloit, WI 53511.

About the Cover

Artist Larry Elmore portrays Darra Winn, the proprietor of Ravens Bluff's Ice House, and employees.

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Issue #53, May, 1990

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Notes From HQ

A Call To Typewriters And Word Processors

Ravens Bluff, The Living City, continues to grow. So do the number of Living City submissions which occupy a good portion of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine file cabinet. Many of the submissions will see print this August when *Inside Ravens Bluff* is released, the Network's second Living City module. The module will be available at local hobby shops and through TSR's Mail Order Hobby Shop. Network members can receive a discount price if they pick up Inside Ravens Bluff at GEN CON® Game Fair or through the Mail Order Hobby Shop. If you buy the module at local hobby stores, which we don't want to discourage you from doing, you will have to pay full price; we don't want to make it difficult for retailers to carry RPGA Network products by charging two different prices.

Last year's release, *Gateway To Ravens Bluff, The Living City,* is still available through the Mail Order Hobby Shop.

We enjoy receiving the many Living City submissions we get; we always can use entries detailing shops, organizations, important personalities, street vendors, and mini-adventures. However, we also would like to receive submissions for the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine that cover other topics.

We have a shortage of feature articles covering the AD&D® Game, TOP SECRET/S.I.™ Game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES Game, and many other systems. We **need** submissions for *The New Rogues Gallery,* and articles that suggest how to improve games, offer hints to game masters and players, provide new equipment, magic items, or foes. POLYHEDRON Newszine writing guidelines are available by writing to HQ. If you have a few ideas for articles, but want our opinion first, send us a letter containing a brief outline for each article.

POLYHEDRON Newszine does not pay for accepted submissions. However, we give authors gift certificates good for merchandise through the Mail Order Hobby Shop. Authors also get the satisfaction of seeing their work in print and receiving service points that are applied to their player or judge levels. Remember, the Newszine only prints articles from Network members.

On the inside back mailer cover is our new disclosure form. **This form must accompany your submissions.** We cannot look at submissions that do not include such a disclosure form; this protects you and us. If you send us a submission without a form, we will send it back to you with a blank form for you to fill out. You can make as many copies of the disclosure form as you want. If you send us multiple submissions in one envelope, send a disclosure form for each submission.

Okay, now with all of that out of the way, get out your word processors and typewriters and start writing. Skip and I anxiously await your submissions.

GEN CON Game Fair And Origins

Summer is just around the corner, and so is Origins in Atlanta and GEN CON Game Fair in Milwaukee. If you are planning to attend either convention, consider judging Network sanctioned events. Last issue of the Newszine carried a judge appeal for both conventions. Don't wait. Fill it out and send it to us. The judges who respond the earliest get their choice of judge slots.

The Network will offer more than three dozen Network sanctioned tournaments and seminars at GEN CON Game Fair, and we are offering many events at Origins—including an AD&D game Grand Masters competition. Members meetings will be held at each convention. And we're planning something special for GEN CON Game Fair to commemorate the Network's 10th year in operation.

Winter Fantasy

Winter is a passing memory to most of us now, but I want to take time to reflect on Winter Fantasy, which was the first convention sponsored wholly by the RPGA™ Network.

The convention was a success, drawing about 240 gamers when we expected 200 or fewer. It was held at the Ramada Inn Airport Convention Center in Milwaukee and featured a plethora of Network events.

A convention highlight for me was watching grand-master-player Steve Glimpse cram for judging a BOOT HILL® Game event. The scheduled judge for the event was stranded in northern Illinois, and Steve—with only a half hour warning—agreed to give up playing in the same event to take the judge's place. Steve nervously pored over the tournament in the Ramada's restaurant while Skip, between bites of dinner, briefed him on the scenario. Steve came through with the proverbial flying colors—even though he didn't have a copy of the BOOT HILL game rules to consult during play. I know many RPGA Network judges have had similar experiences, and HQ applauds all of their efforts.

Another highlight was the Network brunch. The food and the company were good, but what stood out in many diners' minds were the walls. The owner of this particular Ramada Inn is a big game hunter, and he displays assorted animal heads on walls throughout the hotel. It felt a little disconcerting to eat scrambled eggs while the glassy eyes of a very large moose stared at you. There also was a mounted head of an elephant hanging on the wall above the registration desk. Member Glenn Johnson, who was in charge of registration, said it made him feel like he was in the Republican headquarters. Oddly, many people who registered for the convention didn't notice the elephant.

Mooney And Sons Circus

The contest to stock The Living City's circus yielded rides, midway attractions, games, and colorful personalities. Many of the entries will appear in the module *Inside Ravens Bluff.*

The winner of the contest was David Carl Argall of California for his game, Pick A Prize. David received the original art for the cover of POLYHEDRON Newszine #46. The piece was donated by artist James Holloway.

Take Care,

Jean ❑

Letters

Newszines And Network Tournaments

In response to your recent call for reader input on the content of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, I would like to offer my suggestions:

First, more D&D® game articles. I think the adventure in issue #51 was a good idea because it was usable for both gaming systems (the D&D game and the AD&D® game). But don't carry this too far, as the real charm in a D&D game adventure, especially at the upper levels, comes from the D&D game's own exclusive charm

Furthermore, I'd like to see more classified ads (as many as three or four pages) along the lines of sales and gamers interested in other gamers in the same city.

Henry D. Haskell
Birmingham, AL

Thanks for your input, Henry. We have no way of knowing what our readers like and dislike unless they write and tell us.

We'd like to run more articles on the D&D game. However, to do that you readers will have to provide them. The Newszine accepts submissions only from Network members. And at present we only have a couple of D&D game submissions on file.

As for classified ads. Sometimes, like in this issue, we don't run many classifieds. That's usually because we don't have them. We do get some complaints about ads that aren't run, but we try to run every ad we get.

Closing Tournaments

Regarding your reply to Aaron Goldblatt's letter in issue #50, I am very much in favor of your proposal to revive the old policy for nonmembers who qualify for prizes in Network events. I firmly believe that this will provide an additional incentive for active role players to become Network members and will help to make members feel that they have some privileges that nonmembers do not enjoy.

You also point out in that reply that those nonmembers who play in Network events may want to join so that they may qualify for Masters and Grand Masters events. Along that line, may I suggest that the Network begin to include in the information sent to new members a basic explanation of the point system similar to the one printed in an earlier Newszine. It should take little more than a one-page insert to explain the basics of the system, make the new members aware that such things as service points exist (which provides an additional incentive for active participation in the organization), list the player and judge levels and point ranges, and to let the new member know what level must be attained to be classified as a Master or Grand Master.

I have one more comment regarding the point system. As an active and relatively successful AD&D game tournament player, I can honestly say that I don't care what point formula HQ uses as long as I can be confident that the same formula applies to everyone.

Finally, I wish to express my complete aggreement with Jeff Martin's comments in his letter in issue #50. Let us all try to remember when we set out to write a tournament scenario and particularly when we begin to fill out our scoring sheets at the end of a tournament round, that there is more to these events than role-playing. In my opinion, good strategic sense and innovative ideas are absolute necessities for successful play.

Larry "Mac" McAbee
Walnut Hill, IL

We're still thinking abount an alternate prize system for non-members.

In the meantime, we are reducing the number of open events at the GEN CON game fair and other conventions that are big enough to attract lots of members and potential members. More than half of the 32 game tournaments the Network is offering at the GEN CON Game Fair this year are closed to non-members, though some of them will open up on site if they don't fill in pre-registration. Of the major AD&D game tournaments, only two, the Open (of course) and the Benefit, are open to all.

The additional expense and labor required to put an information sheet about the point system into every membership kit is more than you might think. Members who are interested in getting information about the ranking system should send a SASE to HQ. ❑

POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (the official newsletter of TSR Inc.'s ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network) is published bi-monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address for all correspondence is: P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Telephone: (414)248-3625.

POLYHEDRON Newszine is mailed free to all RPGA™ Network members. US membership rates are $15 per year (bulk mail delivery only); Canadian rates are $22; foreign rates are $25 per year (surface mail) or $45 per year (air mail). All prices are subject to change without notice. Changes of address for the delivery of membership materials must be received at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change to ensure uninterrupted delivery.

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The Bard's Corner

Max, The Dragon

by James Martin and Wade Morrow

"In the name of Phillip the Great," the cry rang out, "Unhand her, Dragon!"

"In the name of whom? What, pray tell, is a Great?" asked the Dragon. "Oh, I know! It's one of those little purple things they make wine out of. Did you come out of one of those?"

"No. No! That's a Grape! I said GREAT!"

"Well, the size is right. You can understand the mistake, can't you?" interrupted the Dragon. "Of course, Grapes don't usually come in tin cans. But I'll bet if you WERE a Grape, you wouldn't be quite so sour."

"I'm NOT sour! I'm just upset because you've stolen my Wench!"

"You don't need a WRENCH to tighten your loose screws," replied the Dragon.

"Are you saying I'm crazy?" asked the armored figure. "I'm a Gallant Dragon Slayer—a Knight of the Oblong Table! I'm here to slay the beastly Dragon and rescue the Fair Maiden."

"See?" the Dragon responded reasonably. "You just proved that you're crazy.

"First, you don't know whether you want to slay a Gallant Dragon or a Beastly Dragon. And neither of them is here.

"Second, just WHAT did you intend to use to slay a Dragon? That TOOTHPICK?

"Third, I don't have four Maidens, just one fat, ugly wench."

"I didn't say FOUR, I said FAIR, stupid Dragon!" the knight fumed.

"I'm not Stupid Dragon; I'm Max the Dragon. Although, I think you *might* stand a chance with Stupid Dragon! Did you come here for directions?"

"No, Dragon. I came here to. . . ."

"Please, just call me Max. Now, calm down Grape."

"I'M NOT A GRAPE!"

"Well, I can see that. You're a tin can. But you are turning purple. Maybe you should go see that wizard who changed you. It seems to be wearing off."

"What are you rattling on about?" the knight persisted.

"I'm not rattling. You're the one looking for a wrench to tighten your loose screws, Plum!"

It's not Plum, it's Grape!"

"Okay, Grape!"

"It's not GRAPE either."

"First it's Grape, then Plum, then Grape again, and now it's not Grape. My, you're certainly indecisive. I really do think you should go see that wizard!"

"No, you DON'T understand! I'm here to get the Maiden! Will you unhand her, or do I have to get violent?"

"I don't have hands, I have claws; *large, sharp* claws. Besides, you've already gotten Violet!"

"I said Violent, as in physical—not Violet as in purple! Will you unclaw my wench?"

"I haven't clawed her. And I'm not all that sure that she *is* your Wench, Plum."

I'm not a Plum! I'm a Wrench! I mean a Grape! Oh, just call me Phil."

"Okay, Fill. Please call me Max. I imagine that wizard could help you with your identity crisis, too."

"I don't have an identity crisis!" the knight screamed.

"You don't have a wench, either. And at this rate you'll never get one."

"You're doing this on purpose. I can tell."

"I'm not a Porpoise. I'm a Dragon. Porpoises live in the ocean."

"No! No! I didn't come here for a *Porpoise*. I came here for the Wrench. Uh, I came here for the Fair Maiden. Will you give her up?"

"I can't give her anything higher without harming her. She's already on my top shelf. Now, will you go away Date," the Dragon spat.

"I'm *not* a Date! I'm a Grape! I mean GREAT! I'm a KNIGHT!"

"Oh well. One fruit is much like any other. What would you like on your tombstone?"

"TOMBSTONE?" What's this about a TOMBSTONE?"

"You were talking about dying," the Dragon replied. "Don't you want a Tombstone?"

"I wasn't talking about *dying*. I was talking about killing you."

"Same thing," the Dragon said. "Plum, Date, or Grape?"

"Plum, Date, or Grape WHAT?" the knight sputtered.

"On your Tombstone."

"Phillip The Great goes on my Tombstone. TOMBSTONE? I don't want a Tombstone."

"A dead little tin can without a Tombstone? That's absurd."

"I don't want to die! I want the Wrench! Uh, Wench!"

"Well, why didn't you say so instead of coming here and proclaiming yourself a Plum who wanted a Porpoise?"

"No. No. Why are you torturing me like this?"

"Now there's an idea. I could cut off your toenails and shove them under bamboo splints."

"No, that's shove bamboo splints under my toenails," the knight corrected.

"That's right. Now, why didn't I think of that? Be a good little Raisin and go fetch me some bamboo."

"Are you crazy?"

"Me? I'm not the one running around wearing a tin can, carrying a toothpick, calling myself a fruit, looking for a wrench to tighten my loose screws, and threatening creatures fifty times my size."

"I don't care. I'm not getting bamboo for you to shove under my toenails."

"Then I shall have to eat you."

"Eat me? Why?"

"Because that's how all the Fairy Tales end."

"No, that's NOT how they end. The knight ALWAYS wins. Never mind. Look, will you let the Wench go?"

"Sure, I'll let her go. But I don't think she'll go with you. She said she came here because she didn't like Fruits."

"I'm Not A Fruit! Can I speak to her?"

"Be my guest. Will you be staying for dinner? We're probably serving a nice fruit salad."

"Uh, no thank you. Hey, Caroline! I want you to come back home with me."

"Do you still fantasize about being Emperor of the Universe?" the maiden asked.

"It's not a fantasy. I should be emperor. I'm the only sane person left. Everyone else is crazy; like that Dragon!"

Uh, sure, Phillip. Oh, Maxie, Could we have some wine?"

"Sure, Madam."

STOMP ❑

Torrand's Tribulations

An AD&D® Game Adventure for 6 Level 0 Characters

Illustration by James Holloway

by Wayne Straiton

The characters in this adventure are craftsmen and tradesmen, who will grow into an adventuring profession by the time they complete their mission.

Dungeon Master's Background

The characters are hired by Torrand, who is rumored to be a powerful and successful fighter who roams the area doing good deeds.

Between campaigns Torrand enjoys training other adventurers. Since he knows only ranger skills, but wants to help all classes, he sends low-level adventuring groups on little missions and keeps a close eye on them.

He has been doing this with varying degrees of success for a few years. He is quite pleased with his training program and with himself. He will not aid a party unless absolutely necessary, as he believes accomplishment builds confidence.

Torrand knows the PCs are only craftsmen and tradesmen and has no intention to train them as adventurers. However, a low-level adventuring group Torrand recently put together insisted on bringing along hirelings—enter the PCs.

Unfortunately, the group of adventurers Torrand chose did not work together well. Torrand should have had a clue something was wrong when they insisted on hirelings—one for each of them.

This mismatched adventuring group dies in the Players' Introduction, leaving the PCs to finish the mission. The mission is to take a special healing balm to the son of a wealthy baron in a province two weeks' travel away. The son is very allergic to the wild flowers that grow in profusion around the baron's estate. His allergy is not life-threatening, but it is terribly annoying, and when the flowers are out his father keeps him in bed.

Torrand is concerned about the young man. However, his real purpose in assembling the group is to deal with a small band of kobolds who live near the road that the group must take to reach the baron's estate. The kobolds have been ambushing merchants and travelers, and Torrand wants them stopped. He hopes the kobolds will attack his group of adventurers to give the group more experience in fighting monsters.

What Torrand didn't know was there

was something worse than kobolds in the countryside.

Adelle, a crazed lawful evil magic user whose main objective is to gain control over the area, wants to defeat the legendary Torrand, who she believes stands in her way, and acquire as much land as possible. She has enlisted the aid of a group of thieves to gather information about local adventurers and Torrand. She learned about a group of adventurers going on a mission for Torrand, and quickly and wrongly assumed they were being sent to do her in.

Players' Introduction

When you were hired by Torrand, the famed adventurer, you thought he was going to train you as adventurers by sending you off to perform some important task. Torrand is known for training adventurers of all classes by selecting missions to test their skills. You accepted his request to do a "little traveling" for him. But you were dismayed to learn you were to work as hirelings for a band of low-level adventurers rather than to perform a mission yourself. Still, you were too proud to back down and agreed to go.

Torrand said giant-slaying was taking him away from a very important mission, and he needed the group of six young adventurers to take a special healing balm to a young son of a wealthy baron who lives a few weeks' ride away, just outside of Riverton. The son was in dire need of the medicine. Torrand emphasized this wasn't a training mission.

The six adventurers he selected, who had insisted on having hirelings to perform menial services for them, agreed to go on the life-saving errand. Torrand supplied them with food, a wagon, and light riding horses—and you as hirelings.

You also were given rations and light riding horses. Anvil was given a sturdy pony.

The first week out was uneventful, and you were becoming bored listening to the adventurers talk about their exploits. Your businesses in Hillsdale would have fared better if you hadn't taken Torrand's offer.

It was the morning of the eighth day out that disaster struck. A lone woman in deep green robes appeared before the wagon and waved her arms. You all grew instantly tired and succumbed to a deep sleep. Quill fought the effects of the spell, struggling with all her will power to stay up. But in the end she, too, joined you on the dirt trail. When you awoke some time later, a horrid sight greeted you.

The six adventures' bodies lay at twisted angles, most of their clothes singed. There was no sign of the woman. You knew she was responsible for this carnage. She probably left you alive believing you too inconsequential to deal with.

It is a puzzlement why she did this, why she killed them and left the wagon undamaged. The horses tied to it were unharmed; although they are very skittish. Your mounts, and the surviving mounts of the adventurers, apparently ran off—you can see Anvil's pony standing in the high grass nearby.

You know you must finish the mission the adventurers set out on. The young boy's fate is in your hands now.

You will have to find the healing balm from among the adventurers' possesions, and hope beyond hope that it wasn't damaged. Perhaps you can find some other things to aid you on your mission.

If the PCs look through the wagon, they can find enough good rations to last them at least three weeks, two big barrels of water, seven blankets, two barrels of oats for the horses, two dozen torches, and five flasks of oil.

Also in the wagon is a piece of parchment in a sealed leather scroll case that reads: "My fine adventurers, now that you have reached the town of Riverton, I must congratulate you on getting this far, and now your trip to the baron's is almost over. His son will be pleased. When you are finished with all of this, stop by the Weary Wench in Riverton. There you will receive all the information you need about your noble and perilous mission—Torrand."

If the PCs search the bodies, they can find the following items. The starred items are magical. It is up to the PCs to learn which are magical and what they do. The DM should not divulge the information or encourage them to take items: Silver necklace and matching earrings (worth 220 gp); bronze bracers, slightly melted (worth 5 gp now); soft leather boots in excellent condition *1; set of two crystal goblets (worth 20 gp); leather quiver with silver and gold inlaid designs *2; thieves picks and tools; bronze helmet in the shape of a dragon's head (worth 30 gp); 50' of rope, also unburned *3; Gold and pearl ring *4 (worth 900 gp); flask of good whiskey, flask is singed; battle axe *5; three daggers; charred sack with 40 gp inside; charred sack with lump of melted gold and silver (50 gp value); blue and green ceramic jar filled with glistening cream *6 (they recognize this as the special healing balm); a padded sack containing eight vials filled with bright pink liquid. (Tanner recognizes these as healing potions) *7; a carved ivory stick *8; a coral bracelet, slightly damaged (worth 20 gp).

All other objects are ruined beyond use, and many are unrecognizeable.

1 *Boots of levitation*
2 *Quiver of Ehlonna* (contains two spears, two javelins, and 20 arrows)
3 *Rope of climbing* (command words are Climb, Knot)
4 *Ring of protection +1*
5 *Battle axe +1*
6 Special *healing balm*, works only on wild flower allergies
7 *Healing potions*
8 *Wand of wonder* (This particular wand can be used only by magic users (Tanner counts). The wand has 10 charges. The command word is etched on the side, "Astounding."

If Flechette tries to track the woman in green (Adelle), she loses the trail after a mile.

If the PCs try to gather up the horses, they can find a mount for each of them, including Anvil's pony. This is in addition to the two draft horses which pull the wagon.

If the PCs return to Torrand's estate, they find that the ranger left on his own mission, and Torrand's staff is furious that the characters returned, as the young boy needs the medicine.

Encounter One—Lucinda's Place

As the afternoon wore on, the sky became increasingly overcast. And now, just about an hour before dusk, it has started to rain heavily. Loud thunder crashes all around you and blue-white lightning arcs on the

horizon. The canvas covering on the wagon is not holding up against this storm, and the wind batters at the canvas mercilessly.

Ahead is a farmhouse, which might provide some shelter.

If the PCs decide to approach the farmhouse, continue the description. Otherwise, let them get soaked staying out in the cold rain.

As you near the farmhouse you hear shouts coming from inside. It is too difficult to make out what is being said, as just as you start to make out words, the thunder booms to drown out the voices.

The front door of the farmhouse bursts open and a child runs out, falling into a large mud puddle in the front yard. A woman in the doorway screams at the child as he picks himself up and runs for shelter in the barn.

The child is Shame, the six-year-old half-orc son of the woman standing in the doorway. The house is occupied by the woman, Lucinda, her eight-year-old human daughter, Lucy, and her half-orc son, Shame. Orcs raided the farmhouse several years ago, killing Lucinda's husband.

Lucy is the apple of Lucinda's eye, and Shame is almost always in disfavor. Tonight he was caught taking an apple without asking for it first, and Lucinda kicked him out of the house to spend the evening in the barn. Of course, Lucy can have all the apples she wants—and without asking.

If the PCs ask about the boy in the barn, Lucinda tells them he is being punished, and it is none of their business what is going on. She is not a totally heartless woman, however, and invites them to spend the evening in the barn as well—if they want to get out of the storm. She will not allow them in her house, as she is cautious of strangers. However, if the PCs force their way in, she can't do anything to stop them.

She does not allow Shame back in the house unless the PCs force her. This would be bad for Shame, however, as Lucinda will make him spend the next several nights in the barn after the PCs are gone.

Despite all the problems and being punished frequently, Shame cares about his family and does not want to leave.

Lucy, on the other hand, is arrogant and bratty, being spoiled and almost always getting her way. She sticks her tongue out at the PCs when her mother isn't looking, makes faces at them, and refuses to be polite.

The PCs cannot get any useful information out of Lucinda or Lucy. However, if they talk to Shame and ask him the right questions, they can learn about the woman in green. Keep in mind Shame is only six years old. He will ramble and figit, but will eventually get to the point.

While Shame was doing his chores early this morning he saw a woman in dark green robes on a pretty gray horse talking to a few men who were dressed rather poorly—"sorta like momma's farm hands, but they weren't, cause they were people I hadn't seen before. Of course, that doesn't mean that I wouldn't have wanted to meet them maybe. But I probably wouldn't have wanted to meet them cause they didn't look like nice people. Of course, you know that looks aren't everything, but sometimes they're something, you know." You get the idea. Shame thinks the woman was giving the men directions, as she kept pointing down the road and at a piece of paper she held. The men paid close attention to her. "Maybe she was sorta pretty for an older woman. She had to be at least 30 years old. That's old." The woman didn't have any weapons, and all the men were armed with swords. Shame was afraid they were going to rob his mom's farmhouse or something, and he got the rake out of the barn for defense.

Eventually, they took off down the road to Hillsdale. Shame thought it was all pretty neat to watch, "cause as they were leaving I saw the old woman wave her arms and she disappeared, but her horse kept going and the reins were still in the air so I knew that she was there."

The PCs will not be offered breakfast in the morning. Shame is allowed inside the house in the morning for eggs and bacon—but he has to ask for the plates to be passed to him. Lucinda wants the PCs to go on their way as quickly as possible.

Lucinda: AC 10; HD 1 (0 level); hp 6; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 (whatever cast iron skillet is handy); THAC0 20; Int Ave. (8-10); SZ M; AL N; XP None

Lucy: AC 10; HD 1 (0 level); hp 4; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (whatever kitchen implement is handy); THAC0 20; Int Ave. (8-10); SZ M; AL CG; XP None

Shame: AC 8; HD 1 (0 level); hp 4; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (whatever sharp farm implement is handy); THAC0 20; Int Low (5-7); SZ S; AL CG; XP None

Encounter Two—Gnome Trouble

You continue on your journey to the baron's estate. The ground is still very wet from the storm the day before. The air is humid and sticky, and the breeze is almost undetectable.

You have been traveling down a road which is barely one wagon wide, when up ahead you see a small figure run into the road about 150 yards ahead. The figure, dressed in gray, is waving its arms for you to stop.

If the PCs don't stop, the figure, a young gnome, will try to get out of the way of the horses and the wagon. There is a 60% chance she can avoid the horses and wagon. If not, she will be killed. If the party continues on, the thieves in hiding will follow on their horses and attack, negating the surprise they would have if the PCs stopped for the gnome.

The gnome, named Gracy, is 20 years old, about the equivalent of a seven-year-old human child. A group of thieves, working for Adelle, has been watching the PCs and trying to figure out how to do them in. By chance, they spotted this young gnome and her older brother. The pair was riding a pony. The thieves shot the pony, which lies dying in a roadside clearing, and they grabbed the brother. The thieves forced Gracy to stop the PCs, asking them to help her pony. They told Gracy if she refused they would kill her brother.

If the PCs do not suspect her, she leads them into a clearing, where her poor pony lies on its side, two crossbow bolts sticking into it. The pony will die if it is not tended to within 10 rounds.

When the PCs enter the clearing, the thieves, hidden in the tall grass in a semi-circular formation, rise and begin firing crossbow bolts.

If, however, the PCs suspect the child and take some precautions, they could effect the thieves' plan. If Flechette checks the ground, she notices several sets of horse tracks and a few human tracks. The frightened gnome child refuses to acknowledge the presence of anyone other than herself and the wounded pony.

The thieves' plan is to ambush the party, firing a round of crossbow bolts before the PCs can act. There are eight thieves in the group, only a portion of Adelle's forces. If the thieves win initiative, they will be able to get off a second volley of crossbow bolts before the PCs can move up to melee them.

Adelle told the thieves that this party is comprised of mere hirelings, who she wants out of the picture only because they are associated with Torrand. The thieves are to try to keep one party member alive for questioning, to learn what Torrand is really up to. If the thieves believe that the PCs are getting the best of them, one of the thieves, if able, will move to the captive male gnome and hold a dagger at his throat, demanding the PCs surrender.

Surrender: If the PCs surrender, the thieves tie them up and dither about what to do with them. All plans, which the PCs can overhear, call for killing them. It is up to the PCs to escape, and any reasonable attempt should work.

Defeating the thieves: If any thief is left alive, the PCs will be able to question him. The thieves do not know much, other than that Adelle, a powerful magic user, does not like "this tough fighter named Torrand," and she is doing anything possible to foul up his plans. They will admit that Adelle killed the adventuring party the PCs were traveling with, and Adelle didn't consider the PCs a worthy enough threat at the time to kill.

The gnomes: If the PCs free the male gnome, the brother and sister will be very happy. They are from a farm nearby and will return there at the first opportunity. If the PCs are able to save the pony through healing or by applying first aid, the gnomes will be doubley pleased. If the pony dies, the little girl will beg the PCs to give them a horse so they can go home. In any event, the gnomes give the PCs a gem in payment. The uncut gem is worth 2 gp. However, Cutter can work it into a jewel worth 50 gp.

The PCs can recover from the captured and slain thieves: 30 cp, 40 sp, 40 gp, a 100 gp pearl, a 200 gp silver and pearl ring, and a potion labeled *sweetwater.*

Thieves (8): AC 5 (leather armor and dexterity, 3 in concealment); HD 1 (T 1); hp 6 each; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short swords); THAC0 20; Int Ave, (8-10); SZ M; AL CE; XP 35 each; SA backstab for double damage.

Encounter Three—The Thief

> The brush rustles and a man in leather armor, apparently out of breath, runs into the camp and collapses.

This happens on a random watch during the evening. If the PCs have set watches, those on watch will not be surprised, as the man is making considerable noise running through the brush. He is panting and his face is scratched from running through branches. If not stopped, he collapses next to a fire or in the center of the camp. The man is dressed in leather armor and has four hand axes strapped to his back. Hidden in his armor are a garrot and a purse filled with 20 gp. The man is about 20 years old. If the PCs do nothing, he sleeps until tomorrow morning.

The man, Garet, recently joined a thieves guild and was hired by a woman to ambush a party of merchants on an errand for a great fighter. He didn't mind the mission, but he quit when the thieves shot a pony out from under a pair of gnome children and tied up the young boy. If the PCs have taken Gracy and her brother with them—rather than allowed them to go home—Garet recognizes them. He knows they did not get a good look at him, however, so he remains silent. When he awakens, whether by the PCs shaking him or by waking up on his own in the morning, he recognizes them as the ones he was told to ambush. Garet is frightened because he knows his accomplices botched the mission. Further, he knows if any of the thieves escaped they no doubt informed Adelle that the highest level thief in the group—himself—split because he didn't want to rough up children.

Garet is certain that Adelle will be looking for him, and whatever she has in mind won't be pleasant, that's why he was running. He immediately comes up with a plan: convince the PCs he was after a group of thieves who were threatening a young gnome. He lost their trail and accidently walked into the territory of a few giant boars. He ran as fast as he could to avoid being killed or wounded by the animals. He says he feels like he has been running for hours, and knows he left the boars far behind. He claims when he saw the PCs' camp he just had to take a chance that they were good samaritans and would let him rest here a while.

He introduces himself to the PCs as Sir Gareth Windwillowtree, self-appointed protector of this section of the country. He claims to be a ranger, who is usually very good at tracking, but the storm the other night obscured the tracks of the thieves he was following and covered up the spoor of the giant boars' whose territory he trespassed upon. He begins asking the PCs what they are doing in the area, if they have seen the terrible thieves running loose (he'll congratulate them if they admit to doing the thieves in), and if he could be of service to them and accompany them on their journey. He will impress upon them that his skills will be of great benefit and that it is the least he can do since they took care of the problem of the eight thieves.

He plans to get as much information about the PCs as possible, divide the party after the end of the next encounter, and attack them. Then, he will find Adelle and present her with evidence of the PCs' deaths and information about the mission they were on.

Garet: AC 2 (*leather armor +2* and dexterity); HD 4 (T 4); hp 20; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; THAC0 19; Int Ave. (8-10); SZ M; AL LN; XP 270; SA backstab for double damage.
Magic Items: *leather armor +2, hand axe +1, potion of healing* (hidden in a compartment in a normal hand axe)
Wealth: 20 gp, platinum and onyx ring worth 900 gp.

Encounter Four—Leprechaun Kobolds

A band of kobolds have hidden themselves along the trail, and two of their advance scouts have been monitoring the PCs' progress. The kobolds believe the PCs are merchants—merchants soon to be without their goods and their lives. These kobolds have developed a plan to get the PCs off their mounts and concentrating on something so the kobolds have the edge.

The kobolds pretend to be a leprechaun. They have attached a green-clothed doll to some thin black wires and strung it up in a tree. Two kobolds man the doll, working it like a marionette, while a third kobold, hidden in the brush along the ground, drinks a *potion of ventriloquism* and "talks" for the leprechaun. The kobold makes the voice go all around the party and then seem to come from the doll when the doll is lowered to hang in mid air and

dance. The leprechaun sings a merry tune and tries to get the party to hum along. He is trying to relax them and catch them unawares as the kobold party surrounds the PCs, determines the strongest targets, and attacks. The kobold with the potion is the only one who speaks Common.

Because the doll is partially hidden by the branches and is high up in the tree, it is difficult for the PCs to notice that it is not actually alive.

> As you continue on your trek, you notice that the weather has improved significantly. The clouds are high and wispy, showing no hint of more rain, and the sun is out. A soft breeze, which blows across your path, keeps you cool and comfortable. The leaves of the oak and maple trees rustle gently in the wind.
>
> "Now and a where ya bein a goin on such an a nice day like a this a one is laddies and lassies?" The voice comes from somewhere off to your right. "I be a Mister O'Patrick O'McGee, leader of the leprechauns in this part." It is the same voice, but this time it comes from your left. "Now I'm a bein a wonderin a bit about a now what ya laddies and lassies bein a doin in my woods." The voice now comes from many yards in front of you, from a small green figure lazily floating down from a large tree branch. The figure dances a jig in mid air.
>
> "Top of the morning or whatever time a day it bein a being right about now. I slept a might late, and a I don't recall a just what time a day it is. Not a bit that it's important. So, me laddies and lassies, talk to me. What ya be doin here?"

The "leprechaun" dances some more, bobs up and down in the air, and lets the PCs talk for a moment. He doesn't want them to get too close (and discover he's a doll), so he moves farther up into the tree and tells the PCs to stay back.

> "Now me laddies and lassies, I am bein a willing and able to make ye a little deal here. I won't bein ta need ta turn any of your weapons or pretty things inta noodles and bows ifna ye bein a willing to lay down yer weapons and not pose a threat ta me. Maybe ye might want to throw down a flask of wine or something else, too."

If the PCs won't throw down their weapons, Garet/Gareth will help to get them started, as he's experienced leprechauns before.

> "Okay, so ye not bein so willing to help me out. Well, one more a try an I bein quick to turn your shoes inta oatmeal and yer knives inta paper flowers. Put yer hands as fer away from yer weapons as ye can, cause I'm just bein a little guy and I don't want no problems. And how about that wine?"

If the PCs have not cut off the "leprechaun" yet, he now begins to dance a jig, wildly flying through the air—well, as far as the wires will take him—in an effort to catch their attention. Now the kobolds strike, gaining surprise.

If, however, the PCs caught on to the leprechaun, roll normally for surprise.

Kobolds (22): AC 7; HD ½; hp 3 each; MV 6; #AT 1; Dmg 9 @ 1-4 (dagger), 13 @ 1-6 (spear); THAC0 20; Int Ave, (8-10); SZ S; AL LE; XP 7 each

If a dozen of the kobolds are killed, the rest attempt to flee into the woods. Remember that only one of the kobolds speaks Common, so it is unlikely that he will be among any survivors. If the PCs catch any of the kobolds, the kobolds will talk in their own language and in Orcish. The kobolds, fearing for their lives, reveal that they have been ambushing merchant caravans for the past several months. (And they promise to quit if the PCs let them go.)

If the PCs are able to track the kobolds to their lair, where they will have to deal with any of the remaining kobolds who previously escaped, they can find:

Three hand-woven rugs, worth 100 gp each; a set of four red crystal goblets, worth 30 gp each; a large ruby, a fake worth 1 gp; a gold and topaz bracelet, worth 2,000 gp; two silvered daggers, worth 8 gp each; two bronze daggers, ornamental, worth 10 gp each; 100 gp; 300 sp; and 50 cp.

Garet decides to stike after this encounter. During the fight with the kobolds, Garet sticks to fighting only those kobolds attacking him, and fights slowly so he doesn't have to assist any PCs. He wants the PCs damaged so they don't put up much of a fight when it's time to do them in.

He begins by calling one of the fighters to his side, claiming he saw a kobold go that way. He suggests the fighter and himself pursue the kobold so it doesn't assemble a kobold army. If the fighter is silly enough to fall for his ploy, Garet attempts to backstab the fighter or melee him outright if necessary when they are several yards from the group. If any PCs hear the battle and run to the scene, Garet explains that a kobold ambush lead to the death of their friend.

If none of the PCs rushed to follow Garet and a fighter, Garet returns to the group, telling them their fighter friend has pinned down two kobolds and needs a little help interrogating them. If the entire party does not come (Garet thinks some should remain behind to watch the horses and wagon), he waits until they are a good distance from the wagon and attacks. If, however, the entire party insisted on going, Garet falls behind and attempts to take them out one at a time from the rear with his backstab attacks.

If none of the PCs fell for his ruse about going after a few stray kobolds, he announces he will handle it and runs into the brush. This is followed by muffled noises and thuds as he pretends he is being beaten up. He listens to hear if any PCs are coming to his aid, and quickly hides in the brush when he hears them coming. He attempts to backstab those who arrive.

If none of this works, Garet runs into the brush and discreetly follows the PCs, trying to pick them off one at a time.

If Garet is caught he comes up with a wild story about being possessed by some spirit that caused him to attack the PCs, and "wouldn't it be a good idea if we all went after the evil spirit?" Eventually, the PCs should figure out he is attacking them. If directly accused, he admits he was hired—along with the eight thieves—to do them in.

Encounter Five—Torrand's Visit

Torrand has taken a break from his current project and has decided to check up on the PCs. He appears to them as a low-level ranger who considers himself the protector of this part of the country. Torrand does not know that the thief the PCs encountered earlier used the same ruse.

Torrand found a patch of deep mud, quicksand really, and stuck himself in the middle of it. He is not worried about

getting hurt because he has a ring of free action. He wants to test the party's ingenuity. The immense mud/quicksand patch is 40 feet across and 10 feet deep. Torrand wants the party to "rescue" him from certain doom. As the wagon and horses follow the path near the mud patch, he begins to bellow.

> "Help! Heyyyyyy! Help me! You, with the horses, hellllllllllp!! I'm stuck!" The caller is a man, shoulder-deep in an immense mud puddle off to the side of the trail. His frantic movements threaten to take him deeper into the mud. Several feet from the mud a light brown horse grazes. On the ground next to it is a back pack and a bedroll.
>
> "Pleeeeeeease help me. I'll give you gold. Just get me out of here!" The man sinks a few inches deeper into the mud.

The PCs have several options. They can take Torrand's horse and gear, which will make him very upset. If this happens, he follows them, reveals himself as Torrand, and promptly fires them.

They can continue on, in which case Torrand will get out of the mud, clean himself off, follow them, and fire them.

Or, they can help the man out of the mud. Because he is so far out into the mud, and because he has his hands below the surface of the mud, the PCs cannot throw something to him. The PCs will have to lasso him, enter the mud themselves in the hopes of bringing the man and themselves out—which could put them in danger of drowning in mud, or devise another method to free him. If a PC gets too close to the mud, have that PC roll his dexterity or less on a d20; failure means the PC has fallen in the mud, too. A PC sinks in the mud at a rate of one foot per turn. Torrand, of course, sinks at whatever rate he wants.

After the PCs have rescued him, Torrand introduces himself as Robert Lockwood, protector of the forest. He tells the PCs he saw a small deer caught in the mud, waded in and freed it, and became trapped himself. He does not want to travel with the PCs, but he would like to join them in a meal and be regaled with tales of their adventures. He tells them he heard of a larger party wandering through this countryside with a wagon—a dozen people—six adventurers and their hirelings. He wants to know if the PCs are that group, and if so what happened to the rest of their party.

Torrand does not know about the attack by Adelle. He knows he appointed the PCs as the adventurers' hirelings, but he feels compelled to find out what happened to the adventurers. He will try every persuasive tactic he can think of to get information out of the PCs without revealing who he is.

Torrand is impressed that the PCs were able to survive on their own, and he's doubley impressed if they tell him about the thieves and the kobolds, which were the adventurers' real mission.

Torrand/Robert eventually excuses himself from the party, going off to deal with whatever force did in his group of adventurers. He feels a great amount of remorse, as his missions never ended in fatalities before. The PCs can see "Robert" is noticeably sad. Before he leaves he gives healing potions to any of the PCs still showing signs of damage from a previous fight.

Torrand does not stop the PCs from continuing with the mission of delivering the special healing balm to the baron's son.

Torrand: AC 0 (plate mail and Dexterity); HD 6 (R 6); hp 40; MV 6; #AT 1; D 1-10 + 1 (two-handed sword) or 1-6 + 3 (spear); THAC0 15; Int High (13-14); SZ M; AL NG; XP 100 (rescue) or None (slaying or ignoring); SA ranger abilities, STR 17 (+ 1 "to hit" and damage. Magic Items: *boots of speed, ring of free action, spear +2,* six *potions of healing, hat of disguise*

Encounter Six & Seven—Riverton

The PCs arrive at Riverton. They can either go around Riverton to the baron's estate and deliver the healing balm or they can go into the town.

The town is small and is not detailed for the purpose of this adventure. Entering the town leads the PCs into a fight.

Riverton

> As you clear the rise of the next hill you see the town of Riverton. The small road that you have been traveling on widens at the bottom of the hill to become the town's thoroughfare and ends at the river. Across the river you see farmland. The baron's estate must be just beyond the farms.

The first problem the PCs encounter i the city watch. If they are carting dead bodies in the open, the watch will not let them in the gates. If the PCs act rude to the watch, the men or watch will summon other guards as a show of force, and they will not let th PCs in the gate. The city watch is not tolerant of new people and troublemakers, and they won't think twice about tossing troublemakers in jail fo a day or two.

If the PCs behave themselves and act and look civil, they will get inside.

If the PCs try to melee the watch members, have no mercy.

Watch Members (as many as needed): AC 8; HD 2 (F 2); hp 10 each; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); THAC0 19; Int Ave. (8-10); SZ M; AL N; XP 35 each

Watch Captain: AC 5; HD 5 (F 5); hp 35; MV 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 (long sword); THAC0 16; Int Ave. (8-10; SZ M; AL NG; XP 175

If the PCs are looking for the Weary Wench, as mentioned in the note from the scroll case at the beginning of the adventure, they will face another problem. There is a Weary Traveler Inn and a Welcome Wench Inn, but no Weary Wench. There is no way for the PCs to know which is the right place, and for the purposes of the adventure, whichever one they try first will be the wrong place. If the player characters split up to check out both places, randomly select which group went to the correct establishment. The other group is in trouble because of their lessened numbers. Both inns are similar in nature and serve the same type of people.

Inside the first establishment are seven thieves who were hired by Adelle to find the PCs. These thieves were looking in the wrong places and were unsuccessful. However, they know what the PCs look like, and when the PCs walk in, the thieves decide to fulfill their contract and kill them. The thieves separate to surround the PCs, casually acting as slightly inebriated customers until they are in position. Then, they strike.

Thieves (7): AC 5 (leather armor and dexterity; HD 2 (T 2); hp 9 each; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short swords); THAC0 20; Int Ave, (8-10); SZ M; AL CE; XP 65 each; SA backstab for double damage.

Two of the thieves can attack twice a round, using a dagger and a short sword.

The city watch eventually arrives and sides with the PCs. The bartender vouches for the PCs, explaining that these patrons, who he had not seen before today, surrounded the party and attacked them.

The Right Inn

The second establishment the PCs visit, the correct place, is owned and operated by Lyrthala, a personal friend of Torrand. If Lyrthala suspects the PCs are more of Torrand's trainees, she asks them a continuous stream of questions about their mission and if they expect Torrand to show up here in town. She fancies the ranger and looks forward to his visits. She does not know that Torrand already is in town, with his *hat of disguise* making him look like one of her patrons. Torrand will be upset with the PCs if they willingly spill all the information about their business. In addition, Lyrthala tries to encourage the PCs to spend the night in her establishment, offering them a special rate of 1 gp a person. This is not a special rate, she is just hoping to make a quick six gold pieces. She tells them breakfast will be her treat if they stay. She adds that the PCs will be better prepared in the morning for whatever their mission is if they rest tonight.

If the PCs inquire about the real purpose behind their mission or seek further instructions, as alluded to in the note from the beginning of the adventure (in the scroll case), Lyrthala has been instructed to use this as a stall tactic: "Oh, I think I know what you are talking about. Torrand gave me some information. But I better sleep on it. We'll talk about it in the morning." If the PCs press her, without threatening her, she tells them that they can receive the information after they have been to the baron's estate.

The actual information the PCs are looking for is that the baron's child was not dying, he was simply allergic to wild flowers and the special healing balm will take care of his allergies. Their true mission, revealed to them now, was to take care of a band of dastardly kobolds robbing lone merchant caravans, and that they were actually on an adventurers' training session.

If the PCs agree to spend the night, Torrand, in his disguise, ambles over to them and says, "Uh, some heroes. Off on an important mission and taking time to stop and relax. Relaxing comes for me after the work's done. You'll never be real adventurers." Torrand leaves to change into a different visage and see if the PCs continue with their mission. If they decide to stay the night he waits around in town to see if they leave in the morning.

Lyrthala: AC 9 (no armor and dexterity; HD 1 (F 1); hp 5; MV 12; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger); THAC0 20; Int Ave, (8-10); SZ M; AL NG; XP 200 (getting information without getting stalled), 100 (getting information and getting stalled) or None (attacking or failing to get information)

Going To The Baron's

The baron's estate is large, sprawling across a countryside filled with a riot of beautiful wild flowers. The baron's home is surrounded by more flowers, making it picturesque.

As you ride up to the house, two guards wearing chain armor come out to greet you. "You are on the lands of the baron," the tall one says. "State your business."

Any reference to Torrand or helping the baron's son will get them inside.

You are ushered inside the palatial home. The thick carpets pad your footsteps. The place is elegantly furnished with fine, carved furniture and expensive art. The baron addresses you. "Good adventurers, I am so pleased that you are here to help my son. I have refused to let him get out of bed. It's the flowers, you know, they make him so uncomfortable this time of year. It was so good of Torrand to send you here."

The baron explains the boy's allergy, which keeps him from setting foot outside the home. The baron has not been able to get rid of the flowers; they keep coming up from seed. So he has decided to get rid of the allergy.

To conclude the adventure, the PCs can be introduced to the constantly-sneezing boy. Eventually they should realize the allergy is serious, but not life-threatening. After helping the lad, the baron pays them each 100 gp, lets them spend the night, and sends them on their way.

Ending The Adventure

If the PCs went to the baron's before coming to town, they have to deal with the watch and the two taverns, as detailed at the beginning of Encounter 7.

When they arrive at the correct tavern after completing the mission, Torrand appears to them and explains about the kobolds being the true mission, which he tells them they passed or failed depending on what they did. Further, he tells them he has found out about this wizard called Adelle, who sent thieves after them thinking the PCs were on some great mission for him that could eventually lead to Adelle's downfall. He knows there are other thieves about who she has hired, and would like the PCs to deal with them.

"Ah," Torrand says, leaning back in his chair and winking at the innkeeper. "But that is another mission for you. One I am certain you could handle. I was sorry to hear about the deaths of the original band of adventurers I hired, the group to whom you were assigned as hirelings. I have made restitution to their families. If I send other adventurers out on training missions in the future I will have to be much more careful.

"But I chose well with you, my fine adventurers. You are people with true classes now, and you should be proud. Anvil, the armorer, you have become a true fighter. Flechette, the bowyer/fletcher, you are a ranger. Tanner, the leathersmith, you are a faithful cleric. Quill, the cartographer, you are a wizard who will increase in magical abilities through the years to rival Adelle. Cutter, the gem cutter, you are a thief. Be careful where you practice your trade. And Harper, a teamster, you are a bard. I challenge you to compose a great song about this, your first adventure."

This adventure is dedicated to the memory of Clinton C. Tate, III, the original Torrand. ❑

Anvil

Male Dwarf Armorer

STR: 18/77
INT: 12
WIS: 10
DEX: 15
CON: 18
CHR: 14
AC Normal: 0
AC Rear: 2
Hit Points: 14
THAC0: 20
Alignment: Neutral
Height: 4'5"
Weight: 169 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Black/Black
Age: 162
Weapon Proficiencies: Hand axe, spear, hammer, battle axe
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Master armorer (12)
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Gnome, Goblin, Kobold, Orc, Elvish, Lizardman

Possessions: Non-magical plate +1 (your finest work), shield, axe, dagger, two changes of clothes, boots, large iron box containing a set of armorer's tools, 35 gp, (3,200 gp in safe keeping)

The oldest of a dozen children, you spent a happy youth growing up in a mountain village among close friends and a loving family. Your home life shaped your personality. You are outgoing and friendly, a popular person everywhere you go. You are outspoken, but very patient, traits not attributed to many dwarves. Oh, you brood sometimes, as dwarves are known to do, but only when you are frustrated.

You are very handsome and have a fine, muscular physique that catches the eye of dwarven females. Many have pursued you, still, you never married, enjoying the single life.

You find delight in spending time with other races because you can learn so much. This socializing gives you time to show off your goods and explain dwarvish techniques of armor making. Because of your profession, you also find yourself looking at others' armor, studying it for fit, quality of material, workmanship, and style. You want to keep on top of the latest styles in armor.

Flechette

Female Human Bowyer/Fletcher

STR: 17
INT: 14
WIS: 15
DEX: 16
CON: 16
CHR: 15
AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 15
THAC0: 20
Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 5'8"
Weight: 133 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Red/Blue
Age: 57
Weapon Proficiencies: Bow, spear, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Bowyer/fletcher (15), fire building (14), healing (13), tracking (15)
Languages: Common, Sprite, Pixie, Satyr, Centaur

Possessions: Chain mail (made by Anvil), long bow (one of the finest you have ever made), quiver with 20 arrows, dagger, two changes of clothes, boots, comb (seldom used), ivory ring (gift from mom), small wooden chest filled with fletching equipment, back pack, 10 gp, 20 sp

Life has not been a bouquet or roses for you. You were raised in a large city by people who weren't your parents. You never knew your father. Your mother was a ranger who only visited with you once or twice a year. The other children made fun of you because of your "part-time" mother. You didn't listen to them; you were proud of your mother and waited month upon month for her return so you could hear stories of her adventures and battles. You understood her need to travel and that a child would prevent her from practicing her career.

You don't show affection often. Affection would make you seem vulnerable. You picked fights regularly when you were young, which you are certain helped develop your muscles and rough attitudes.

While clean, you always look dishevelled; neatness is not your strong suit. Your long red hair is flyaway and wavy, and on windy days it is a mass of tangles. Your clothes are always clean, but they are old and worn.

Tanner

Female Human Leather Worker

STR: 11
INT: 13
WIS: 18
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHR: 15
AC Normal: 2
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 10
THAC0: 20
Alignment: Lawful Good
Height: 5'5"
Weight: 116 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown
Age: 18
Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, hammer, lasso
Nonweapon proficiencies: Leather worker (13), weaver (12), rope use (16)
Language: Common
Spells/day: 4 first level from the spheres of *Combat, Divination,* and *Healing*
Deity: Heimdall

Possessions: Chain mail (made by Anvil), shield, staff, 25' silk rope, dagger, seven changes of clothes, boots, comb, brush, perfume, rouge, small wooden chest containing leather working tools, wooden holy symbol, 25 gp

Religion is a very important part of your life. You remember your mother and father taking you to a temple when you were only a few years old. It was all very impressive. Your father was a leather worker, and you divided your time between the temple and his business. You learned his trade, and find satisfaction in making items out of leather. It keeps your hands busy and yourself productive; you always have to be doing something. You enjoy the shop. The smell of new leather is appealing. By the time you were 14, your father often left you in charge of the business while he went off to solicit more customers.

You studied at the temple of Heimdall. You broadened your interests and learned more about your father's leather business while learning weaving and rope-making from your mother.

A few weeks ago it happened. You got your calling from a solar who appeared to you in a dream and told you that Heimdall wished your assistance. What's more, it seems like you are being granted spells.

Quill

Female Half Elf Cartographer

STR: 8
INT: 17
WIS: 16
DEX: 17
CON: 10
CHR: 18
AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 8
THAC0: 20
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Height: 5'
Weight: 100 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Auburn/Green
Age: 48
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Cartography (17), direction sense (17), reading/writing (17)
Languages: Common, Elvish, Gnomish, Halfling, Goblin, Gnoll, Orc, Hobgoblin, Sprite

Possessions: Dagger, five changes of fine clothes, fine leather boots, small wooden chest containing a dozen scroll cases, ink, parchment, quills, manicure set, nail polish, scented soap, ivory brush, silver comb, silver-framed mirror, four vials of cologne, hair ornaments, rouge, 200 gp necklace, 50 gp ring, 100 gp ankle bracelet, 100 gp earrings, and 10 platinum pieces, (and more wealth than most people think about is in safe keeping)

You are an orphan raised by elven royalty. Your father, a human, died in a great battle. And your mother, an elf who was related to the queen, died in childbirth. You were raised by relatives, a loving duke and duchess, who taught you that everyone in life owed you something. Unfortunately, you never were in line for the throne. That was something you felt was due you.

Beauty is an important part of your life, and you use your talents to write beautifully. You are certain you are the best scribe in the land. You own your own business, a scribe/cartographer shop, and your business is doing very well. Of course, with you in charge it couldn't do otherwise. You had tried your hand at drawing once, being an artist seemed a natural profession. However, you found you had no talent in that area. You have come to be content drawing maps for others.

Cutter

Male Human Gem Cutter

STR: 16
INT: 11
WIS: 13
DEX: 18
CON: 15
CHR: 14
AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 8
THAC0: 20
Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 5' 9"
Weight: 171 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Blond/Hazel
Age: 45
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, long sword, garrot
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Gem cutting (16), blind fighting, sound analysis (9)
Languages: Common, Halfling, Elvish

Thief Skills

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	HN	CW	RL
25	20	15	10	5	8	80	—

Possessions: Leather armor, four daggers, garrot, two changes of clothes, boots, comb, small wooden chest containing gem cutter's blades, hammers and chisels, and 35 gp

You grew up the renegade of a wealthy family. You were always running on the street, getting into trouble, and bringing the wrong kind of attention to your parents. It started when you were only seven years old. Your friends, who were from poor families, would take you along to steal fresh baked pies from window sills, apples from merchants, and purses from elderly people. They also taught you how to swindle the people in the street. You did these things because they made you accepted in the group, and because you were the youngest you got the dirtiest tasks.

Your father was a jeweler by trade, and he taught you how to cut gems. He hoped the skill would keep you out of trouble. And, as you grew older, it did.

You keep a low profile, trying to avoid people you're unsure about, and staying away from crowds if possible.

Harper

Male Human Teamster

STR: 17
INT: 14
WIS: 15
DEX: 17
CON: 14
CHR: 16
AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 9
THAC0: 20
Alignment: Neutral Good
Height: 6'1"
Weight: 180 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: Brown/Brown
Age: 21
Weapon Proficiencies: Bastard sword, spear, sap, dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Teamster (19), musician (16) animal trainer (horse) (15), land riding (18), animal lore (14)
Languages: Common, Elvish, Gnome, Dwarvish, Orc

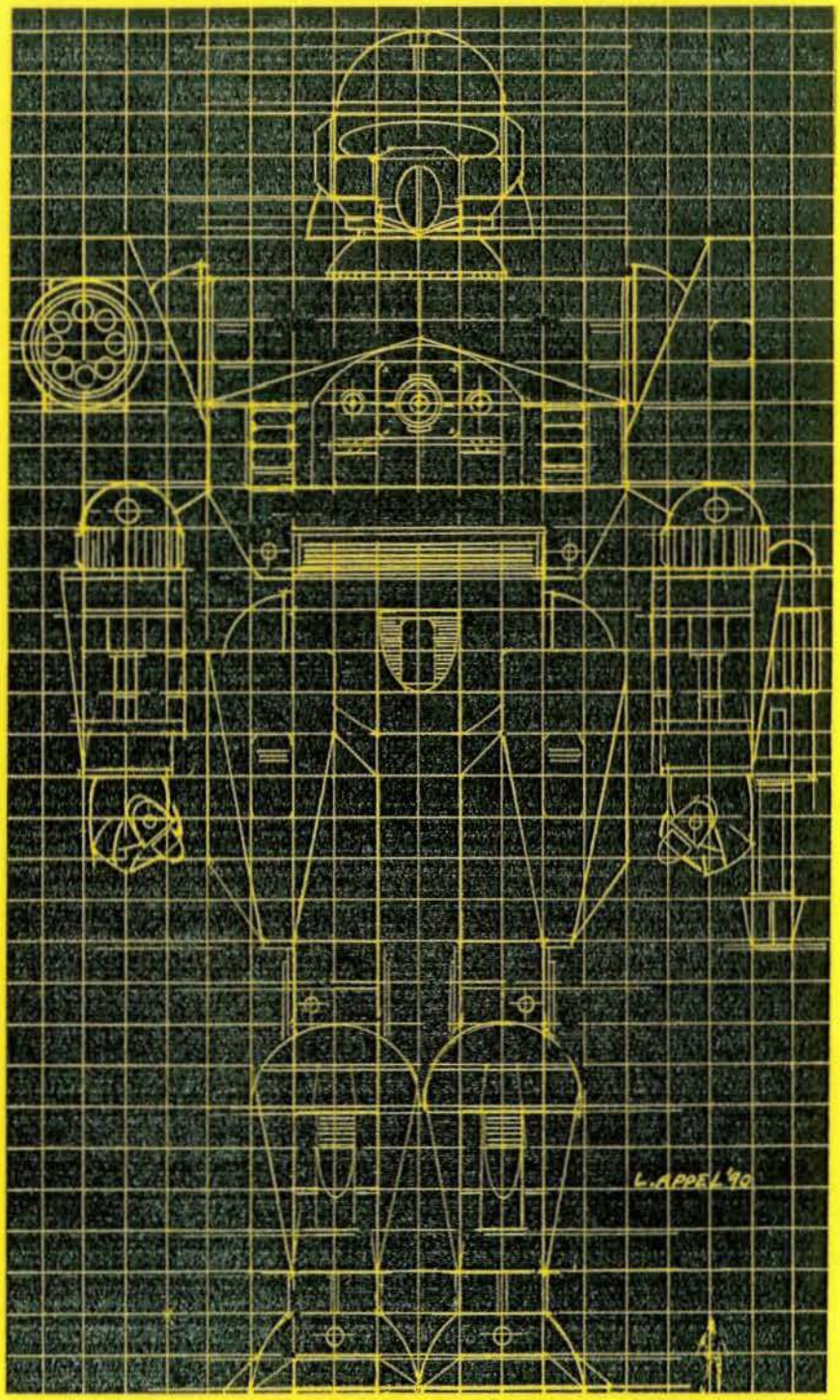
Possessions: Leather armor, spear, sap, dagger, two changes of clothes, boots, comb, brush, razor, soap, training ropes and crops, horsehair belt, small harp, 10 sp, 5 gp

You ran away from home when you were eight years old. You knew a farmer's life was not for you. And while you liked being part of a family, you wanted no part of cleaning out the barn, feeding the chickens, and performing other chores. On your own, you found you had to "borrow" things to survive.

Eventually you made your way into the elf woodlands, where you did odd jobs for a place to stay and food. This was a wondrous society full of new experiences and new friends. As you grew older, you watched the elven fighters practice, and you got to spar with the novices. You suffered many bruises and cuts, but it was worth it, and it was much more exciting than working in the fields. You listened to the elves tell tall tales, and they taught you how to play the harp. Your love of music has grown through the years, and you frequently find yourself playing at any opportunity.

American Steel

The Dreadbot Comes To Life In The GAMMA WORLD® Game



by Rob Nicholls

Baron Teroken was a fanatical believer in the Doctrines of Genetic Purity, who began a campaign to eliminate several Orlen settlements bordering his lands. The Orlens defended their homes the best they could, but they were helpless before Teroken's superior numbers.

When Orlen survivors fled into the southern Deathlands, Teroken assembled a vanguard of his best knights and began marching south.

After nine days they came upon a ruined place of the Ancients. The few Orlens defending it quickly fell to the murderous knights' more advanced weaponry. Yet, when Teroken's men moved into the ruins proper, a series of ominous thumping sounds, like heavy footfalls, filled the air. From behind a jagged hill came a metallic titan in human form. It cut through Teroken's men as a child squashes insects.

One of the survivors claimed to have seen Teroken die: "The thing just marched up and stepped on him, crying in a tinny voice, 'For our families and all Orlens everywhere. We are avenged.' "

Dreadbot (WARDEN Mkl)

Number	1
Tech	H IV
Armor	12 (−60)
Hit Dice/Endurance	600
Hit Points	2000
Control	Special
Sensors	H,T,IU,R,C
Power	N
MN	8
A/D	100
Brakes	10(x5)
PS	1500(+6)
DX	14(+1)
MS	12
PR	62 +4
Speed	2 legs = 200
Size	10 meters tall, humanoid shape
Weapon Systems	Varied plus standard
Crew/Passengers	2 (pilot and gunner)

The Dreadbot is a Programmed Machine, which is a type of robot (see GAMMA WORLD® game rule book, page 60). Like other large robots, it moves as a vehicle. However, for the purposes of malfunctions, the Dreadbot is still considered a machine.

Description: In the years immediately before the holocaust, the American military realized that a modern arms conflict would result in the creation of chaotic forces of unknown potential, such as mutants, rogue robots, etc. To combat these possible threats to post-war reconstruction, the military developed WARDEN: Walking Assault Robot for Deviant Element Nullification. These hulking mechanical giants were designed to deliver massive firepower under direct human control. Of the three versions developed, the first was the WARDEN Mark I, commonly known as the Dreadbot. Although meant for post-war duty, the holocaust became so devastating that eventually even the WARDENs were put on the final line. Those WARDENs that survived are scattered across the ruins of America, waiting for the human or mutant with enough luck and skill to get them functioning again.

The Dreadbot is about 10 meters tall and humanoid shaped. The crew consists of one pilot and one gunner who sit in the cockit in the Dreadbot's head. It is possible for the pilot to operate a Dreadbot without a gunner, but the operation is not easy or efficient.

Learning to operate the Dreadbot, as with any other artifact, is difficult and time consuming. For the GM's convenience, two different methods are provided.

Operating The Dreadbot

Method One: Characters must use the Artifact Examination Chart to determine how well they comprehend the Dreadbot (see rule book, pages 32 and 59). One success on the chart means that the character is capable of performing one operation, piloting or gunnery. The same character must gain another success on the Artifact Examination Chart to also perform the other operation.

However, understanding the Dreadbot enough to handle repairs and maintenance requires yet another success on the chart at two complexity levels higher than normal (see rule book, page 32). The gunnery and maintenance abilities are performed at the character's Rank modified by his **IN** score.

The pilot's ability to perform difficult maneuvers, such as picking up something or taking a corner at faster than half speed, is accomplished at the pilot's unmodified Rank plus the Dreadbot's Maneuver Rating (MN) (see rules supplement, page 12). Whenever any of these abilities is performed, be sure to apply the appropriate number of Result Shifts for differences in Tech Level.

Method Two: Game Masters who are not comfortable with the Artifact Examination Chart can opt for this method. Concealed under the pilot's seat is a compartment marked "Emergency Training Unit." Inside is a thought cap and three disks (Tech C IV, presented in GW9, Delta Fragment, page 29). This cap is a psionic teaching device roughly shaped like a bicycle rider's helmet and powered by a chemical energy cell. A magnetic thought disk, a five-centimeter-diameter disk containing a great store of data, is placed in the top of the cap.

Characters using the helmet learn Dreadbot operation skills. One disk contains information on piloting the Dreadbot, a second on firing the heavy weapons, and the third on repairing and maintaining the Dreadbot. Learning each skill takes 3d6 hours and depletes the energy cell. After each learning session, the character must make an **MS** roll on the Mental Shock table and suffer the results. Each session also costs the character 300 experience points. If the character's Rank is less than 5, the experience cost is doubled. These points must be subtracted immediately, even if it means dropping the character's total to a negative number. Furthermore, it takes a biological mind 1d6 months to recover sufficiently to use the thought cap again.

A character using the cap attains Level 1 in whichever Skill they trained in: Piloting, Gunnery, or Technician. The details on Skill use are found in the rules supplement on page 7. Gunnery-Heavy Weapons is a Combat Skill, thus the character adds his Skill Level to his Attack Rank and to the base damage caused when using the Dreadbot's weaponry. The Piloting and Technician Skills are considered Professional. The Technician Skill falls under the category of Maintain/Repair, in which the character adds his unmodified Skill Level to his IN score when attempting such operations. Piloting is a Use Skill, except in combat, and as such a character recieves a +5 bonus to his Skill Level. This modified Level is added to the Dreadbot's Maneuver Rating instead of the character's Rank when attempting difficult moves. Under this method, there are no Result Shift penalties for differences in Tech Level, as these Skills are implanted directly into the character's brain.

While the Skills required to operate the Dreadbot are highly specialized, the GM might want to allow characters possessing them to have benefits in related areas. For example, someone with the Technician Skill might be given a bonus at trying to repair other Tech IV items.

Running The Dreadbot

The pilot is in charge of all movement and any unarmed combat, such as punching, kicking, stepping on, etc. The pilot also can attack with any one weapon under the following conditions: the weapon to be fired is not being used by the gunner, if he is present, and the Dreadbot must be stationary. Further, do to the limited weapon controls at the pilot's station, the pilot makes weapon attacks at a −2CS penalty, even if the pilot possesss the Gunnery Skill. This penalty does not apply to unarmed attacks made by the pilot.

The gunner is in charge of using the Dreadbot's weapons and can operate as many as he could normally attack with per turn. However, the gunner cannot attack with the Dreadbot's arms and legs—these actions are under the pilot's control. In addition, if the pilot is using an arm, the gunner can not use the weapon mounted on that arm during the same Action Turn. The pilot and gunner make all of their attacks at their normal Attack Rank plus or minus any appropriate modifiers. Coordination between the pilot and gunner is crucial.

Fighting With The Dreadbot

The weapon systems are many and varied, and GMs can alter them to fit their campaigns using weapons in the rule book and from other source material.

A large disrupter cannon on the right arm causes a base damage of 40 points with a base range of 400 meters. The left arm holds a mini-missile battery composed of eight launchers with 8d10 missiles. Each launcher can be fired individually, or four can be fired simultaneously as a barrage.

Continued on page 31

The New Rogues Gallery

Phoenix Roses

by Hubert Phillips III

A man stood by a tower window, watching the crimson summer sun setting across the western bay. Two ships, backlit by the sun's rays, sailed past on their way to the city of Tsurlagol, home of the infamous Marquis of Huelva. Their dark hulls cast thick black shadows over the water, while the sun set the sails aflame with a crimson glow. Pensively, the man rubbed his chin and murmured, "Oh, Eye of Drulit, eye so bright, tell me your secrets, what you see in your flight." The sun did not answer, but its light still shone on the tower that stood in the great manse on a peninsula jutting into the Sea of Fallen Stars. A small crystalline box on a study table behind the man chirped, "The Eye of Drulit, name in the de-Vaucouleur Stellar catalog of anum 3,000, is a red giant star in the quadrant of. . . ."

The man turned, his furry green robes embroidered with black skulls swirled gently around him; the skulls gleamed satiny smooth in the fading light. "Quiet, cube. I do not need your repetitious rendition from obscure, ancient tomes. Provide data of value when requested, not when you desire."

The box replied with another chirp, "Sir, you did ask to be informed of the secrets of the sun. Be thankful my microwave terminals continue to function and that the water has not corroded through the vault holding my data retrieval. . . ."

"Enough," snapped Fairfern. "I have had you for 30 years, and I have heard all of this before. Next you'll spout about the pressure sensors and your main "computer" and other things you've never been able to clearly explain. Maybe some day I'll rescue those items for a lark, but now I intend to visit a dear friend, and I must prepare to leave."

Fairfern believed that any user of the magical arts is an enterprising fellow. So when his spur of the moment visit to his fellow sorcerer turned up an empty, unguarded mansion, Fairfern's thoughts turned to profit and he began to search the home and grounds. He was most interested in the strong sense of death that hung in the building. As a necromancer, the magic in death had a magnetic effect on Fairfern. His investigation led to a nearby grove of forbidding Flail Trees, deadly plants with flexible branches that whip any object to fertilizer that moves over their roots. Murmuring a spell of vegetable quiescence, he passed into the grove. There he found the expected mound. Fairfern spoke a few words on the strange ways of providence, then walked back to the mansion. There he lassoed a witless human (no doubt one of the late sorcerer's creations, or a burglar rendered mindless by some magical ward) and gathered some trinkets of interest. He uttered more words and he and his collection fragmented into a whirling mass and vanished.

A week later Fairfern sat in his study and pondered his recent acquisitions. A crystal and a book he had taken resisted his every effort to comprehend them. However, a smaller book was a monograph concerning the cultivation of the Phoenix Rose, a flower that explodes into flame on contact with water. This greatly pleased Fairfern, since floral or plant magic had been his first course of magical study. Already two servants were preparing a special arborium so a small crop could be grown.

Fairfern's most interesting prize was the witless human. Of itself, it was nothing more than a six-foot-tall, dusty blond-haired, green-eyed mass of bulging muscles. Its mind was strange—fury incarnate one moment, then passive curiosity the next. Fairfern had determined that it was a magical construct, but how or when it was made he could not tell. He decided the risks in assuming control of this strange creature were too great; but he liked its form. The necromancer rang a small copper bell, and a two-foot tall, wizened creature appeared. In general form the creature was humanoid, but it had two furry membranes that connected its arms to its sides. Ears thrice the expected size hung from its head, and its orange eyes bulged and were seamed with blue veins. Fairfern smiled with pride at the creature, which was a homonculous he constructed himself about 50 years ago. Fairfern had named the creature Garth.

"Vigilant I am, always," squeaked Garth. "Master calls, and I come. How can the master be served at this moment?"

"Garth, is my laboratory ready?"

"Yes, master. The strange creature and all materials have been placed as requested."

The necromancer rose. "Then to work, Garth. You and I shall attempt a new experiment of truly unusual quality." He rose quickly, setting his robes dancing, and strode downstairs; Garth vigorously flapped along in tow. Some minutes later they arrived in a small, cluttered room. Oil lamps on the walls shed a hazy light. Fairfern seated himself on a gold wire chair, while Garth hopped into a glass box on a nearby table. A thick carpet of pine needles lay within the box. On the floor lay the strange human construct, roped and chained for safety. Beside Fairfern a copper brazier flared with a bright blue-black fire that leaped high above the bones that lay at its bottom. Smoke swirled in the room, engulfing all three beings. Five words hissed from the necromancer's lips to shimmer in the air before tumbling down into the chained human's body. The haze moved outward as a bubble of pressure filled the room. A cry, as from a dog in agony, split the air.

Squinting, Fairfern touched a rod to the body and the pressure vanished instantly. Smiling grimly, he reached down and picked up a pearly sphere that now lay on the construct's chest. Two swift blows from a hammer reduced the pearl to powder, which he sprinkled over Garth's head.

Fairfern touched the rod to Garth's head, murmured more words, and set Garth on fire. Homonculous and pine needles vanished in a burst of bright flame. Exhausted, Fairfern slumped in his chair and dozed.

A rattle of chains soon ended his nap. He started for a second, then came to full consciousness. The brazier was cold and dark beside him. A dry, gritty voice crackled in the chamber, causing him to turn.

"Success, master. But please for a drink. The smoke harms my throat." The necromancer moved to the side of the construct who was now sitting up. Fairfern gave it a flask of water and

studied the green eyes that before had been filled with a stupid, vacant stare. Now they sparkled with alertness. "Garth, did it go well? Is the body now yours?"

"It is as you ordered master. The beast within is gone with the pearl. I, Garth, now control its frame."

"Perfect, perfect," the necromancer said. "I will release you and we'll move to fresher air upstairs." Quickly undoing the ropes and chains, Fairfern helped his servant to stand in the unfamiliar body.

A week later Garth stood outside in the garden, breathing deeply after a long exercise. It had taken only a few days for him to adjust to this new body and the increased strength he gained with it. Much to Fairfern's satisfaction, his servant was still utterly and completely loyal and just as fiercely vigilant as before. With the improved body, Fairfern knew Garth was capable of more and began to teach him the gentle arts of humanity—language, culture, magic, and unarmed combat.

The months passed quickly. Winter arrived and red-tinged snow covered the grounds of a timeworn inn. Inside, Fairfern sat in a chair made from the tough, green blade-leaves of a formidable Rass plant, gazing through an ice-rimmed southern window. Outside, his creature practiced horsemanship amid the snowdrifts and tangled hedges. Turning toward the crackling fireplace that warmed this corner of the inn's sitting room, Fairfern considered the past year with pleasure. His homonculous, Garth, made great strides with the body.

Fairfern listened as his cube recited: "11th of Pre-Spring. Garth's body has taken well to the intricacies of combat. Garth's animal instincts, balance, and smooth coordination have helped to make the creature proficient in sword, spear, and bow; Garth seems to rejoice in the cutting power of the scimitar. On horseback he rides as one with the roan mare. I note that Garth calls his horse Sunset, a most romantic name. I marvel at the graceful poetry of them in action, the sharp, clean moves with which horse and rider cut and turn as a team. The conjured servant thrives on this physical work, and his body has turned hard and coppery with outdoor work."

The cube continued to talk of Garth's accomplishments, about his command of four languages and his sophisticated, courtly manners.

Fairfern interrupted. "Greatly surprising me, however, is that this experiment is almost a failure in magical terms. Although Garth is a magical creation and inhabits his current body because of magic, his mind is a miserable wasteland for spell casting. He cannot retain the mindset necessary for casting any of the true, quality spells that are the mark of a master sorcerer.

"Still, this is better than nothing, as many in this retched age are cursed with not a whit of sorcery in their blood.

"During our travels I have come to see Garth as more than creation and servant. His eager strength and polite attentions have touched me. His companionship and youth invigorate me. We actually have had fun together. Backed by Garth's strong arm, we took an overdue journey to a drowned city in the heart of the Sea of Fallen Stars. There, our cube's parent mode, its nascent source, was recovered. It is big, 15 feet tall by 20 feet wide by 30 feet long.

"Under the golden beams of Drulit's Eye, we ventured into long ignored forests in the far south. In the dim red gloom of sunset, a dred rockwolf took us by surprise, leaping out of the stone itself. Its poisonous claws slew my mount, transforming it into a rock statue. I fell helpless beneath the creature. But Garth hammered the earth beast from behind, distracting it. I have not seen the like in a battle for many years. At last, Garth's sword and dagger triumphed and the rockwolf perished. But, enough tales of adventure for now. Tomorrow we arrive home for a well-earned rest."

Fairfern smiled at the memories, picked up his cube, tucked it away in his robe, and slipped off to bed.

The next morning he was not smiling. Upon his arrival home, he discovered dry plants, unkempt horses, and mold in the storerooms. The library was an exception. Of course, with the intruding door warden and the manservant and the Marquis' chief scribe all there to keep things tidy, why shouldn't it be so? The three noted Fairfern's presence with great alarm, as they looked up from the magic tome they were copying. Fairfern muttered and purple syllables from the tome wormed their way into the thieves. One was transformed into a gorsebush, the other into a hardened mesquite tree. The Marquis' scribe began to sweat as he saw Fairfern step through the door. As Fairfern changed into a black robe with leering green skulls, he spoke more words, returning the scribe—slightly damaged—to his ruler.

The next day Fairfern began to clean up and sent Garth into town to sell some items collected during their adventure. Eventually, Fairfern's tidying took him to the arborium, where the soil was bone dry. Furious, he bent over one of the lovely flowering plants and poured water on the roots.

Garth had been successful in town; the items were in demand and a considerable sum jingled in Garth's bags as he headed home to his master. A special present for Fairfern, a small tome on animating stones (found in a peddler's tent) was safely tied at the apprentice's side. However, as he neared home he noticed a curtain of golden fire rise and sear the sky. Garth spurred his roan toward the house. His fears were true—there was a fiery blaze coming from the arborium. Fairfern, his clothes charred, lay outside the aborium. A charred sign hung from the greenhouse wall: **Phoenix Roses, Do Not Water.**

Fairfern barely lived, and he bade Garth closer. "My truest child. Time has at last caught me. Now, Thanatos and Mors will get the spirit they long have sought. My death frees you, but I name you son, heir."

Taking his master's head gently, he whispered: "You created well, master. See how I weep for you?"

"Leave me, Garth. Go into the manse," the necromancer gasped.

As Garth obeyed, Fairfern cast one last spell.

Garth sat in the kitchen with his back to the door. The fire outside continued to burn. Suddenly, the night went silent and a cock crowed loud and near. Garth

rose, knowing Fairfern's last spell was to free him. He went outside, took the necromancer's body, and placed it in the burning greenhouse. He put the little tome he had purchased in his master's hands, then left the place.

Garth ordered the servants to throw everything that was charred and burning into the pyre, and he tossed oil on it to insure a hot blaze. Then, he stood watching as the greenhouse burned down to coals and the coals dissolved into ashes.

Fairfern the Necromancer

Male Human Druid/Magic-user Level 6/16

STR: 9
INT: 18
WIS: 16
DEX: 16
CON: 10
CHR: 15
COM: 12
AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 6
Alignment: Neutral
Age: 50
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Dart, Staff, Scimitar, Long Sword, Lasso
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Ancient History (17), Astrology (18), Ancient Languages (18), Reading/Writing (19), Healing (14), Local History (15), Religion (16), Spellcraft (16), Agriculture (18), Brewing (18), Etiquette (15), Riding, Land-based (19)
Languages: Common, Gnomish, Elvish, Treant, Crow

Druidical Spells/Day: 4 3 2 1
Wizard Spells/Day: 5 5 5 5 5 3 2 1
Magic Items: *Throwing dagger +2, wand of polymorphing* (20 charges), *bracers of defense AC 6*

Druid Spells Usually Carried

Level One Spells

Detect Poison — *Entangle*
Pass Without Trace — *Locate Plants*

Level Two Spells

Resist Fire — *Slow Poison*
Warp Wood

Level Three Spells

Dispel Magic — *Plant Growth*

Level Four Spells

Speak With Plants

Magic User Spell Books

Level One Spells

Affect Normal Fires — *Alarm*
Burning Hands — *Charm Person*
Detect Magic — *Erase*
Hold Portal — *Read Magic*
Sleep — *Unseen Servant*

Level Two Spells

Continual Light — *Blur*
Darkness — *Detect Invisibility*
ESP — *Fog Cloud*
Hold Person — *Improved Phantasmal Force*
Invisibility — *Web*

Level Three Spells

Clairaudience — *Clairvoyance*
Dispel Magic — *Hold Person*
Hold Undead — *Non-Detection*
Spectral Force — *Tongues*
Water Breathing — *Wraithform*

Level Four Spells

Charm Monster — *Detect Scrying*
Dimension Door — *Enervation*
Minor Creation — *Plant Growth*
Shadow Monsters — *Solid Fog*

Level Five Spells

Animate Dead — *Avoidance*
Chaos — *Cloudkill*
Dismissal — *Contact Other Plane*
Magic Jar — *Summon Shadow*
Telekinesis — *Teleport*

Level Six Spells

Anti-Magic Shell — *Death Fog*
Death Spell — *Enchant an Item*
Ensnarement — *Reincarnation*

Level Seven Spells

Charm Plants — *Duo-Dimension*
Limited Wish — *Phase Door*

Level Eight Spells

Clone — *Demand*
Sink — *Trap the Soul*

Appearance: Fairfern is 5'11" tall, weighs 165 pounds, and has short silver hair and gold eyes.

Background: Fairfern began his adventuring career as a druid and gained fame as an herbalist and gardner. Later, hungering for more power, he studied sorcery, calling himself a necromancer and ever trying new magical experiments. His most prized magical creation was Garth.

Garth The Homonculous

Male Human Magic User/Fighter Level 3/3

STR: 18/25
INT: 13
WIS: 15
DEX: 10
CON: 17
CHR: 11
COM: 17
AC Normal: 4
AC Rear: 4
Hit Points: 25
Alignment: Lawful Neutral
Age: 23 (this body)
Weapon Proficiencies: Scimitar, Long Sword, Short Bow, Spear, Dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Endurance (17), Running (17), Swimming (18), Agriculture (13), Animal Handling (14), Riding, Land-based (18)
Languages: Common, Gnome, Elvish, Treant
Spells/Day: 2 1
Magic Items: Chain mail +2, spear +2

Spell Books

Level One Spells

Friends — *Jump*
Light — *Magic Missile*
Phantasmal Force — *Shield*

Level Two Spells

Blur — *Darkness*
Scare — *Strength*

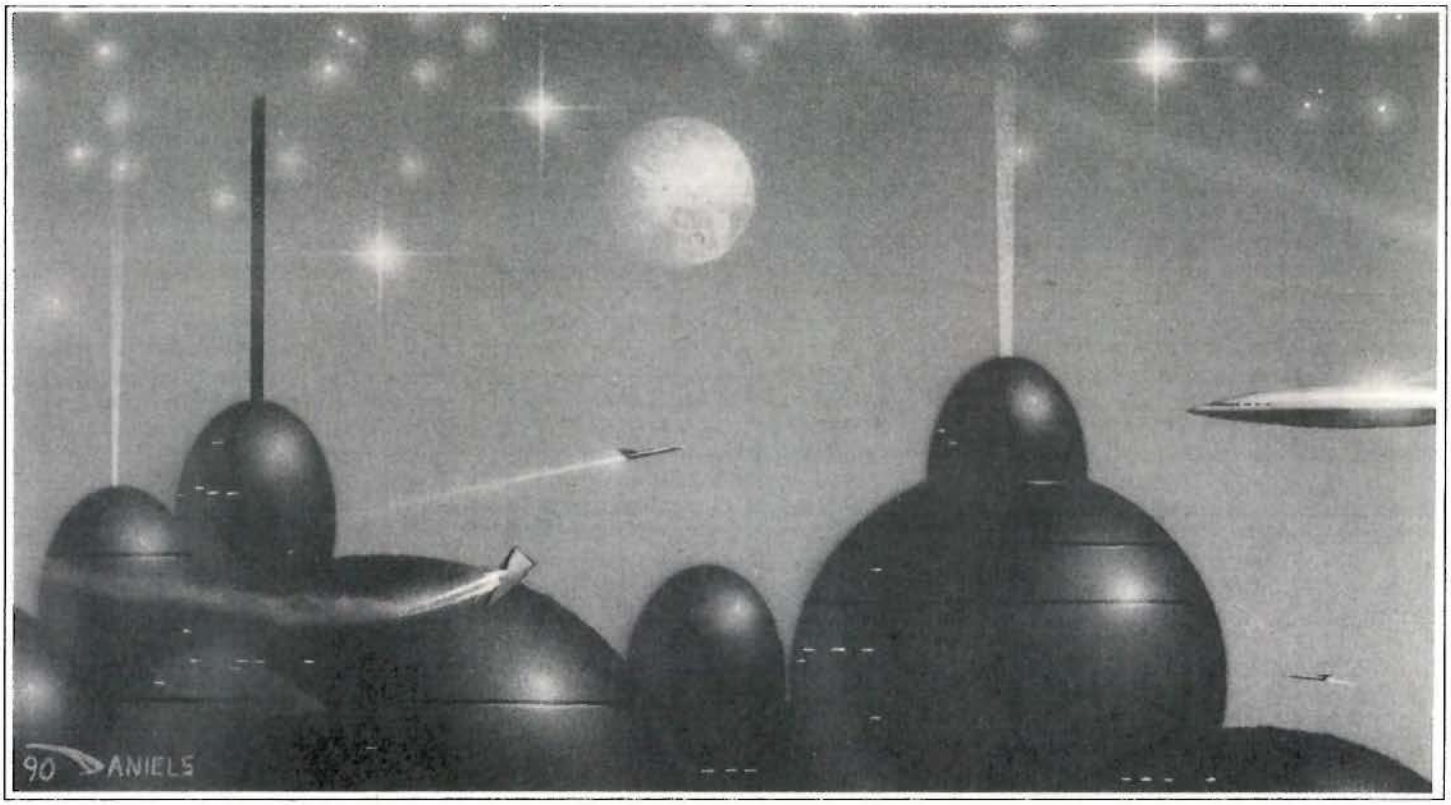
Appearance: Garth's current form is 6'1" tall, weighs 205 pounds, has shaggy blond hair and emerald green eyes. He is very muscular and roguishly handsome.

Background: Garth was given life about 50 years ago as a small humanoid creature with membrane-like wings. When Garth was given an improved, larger body, he was trained in spell casting, but Fairfern was not satisfied with his progress and Garth began training as a fighter. Garth misses the wings, but he enjoys this taller frame. He also revels in the strength he commands and never misses an opportunity to flex his muscles and perform feats of strength.

Garth enjoys traveling and adventuring, ever seeking to improve his fighter skills. He also enjoys the company of others. Garth does not like to be alone. ❑

The Living Galaxy

No Two Urban Jungles Should Be Alike



by Roger E. Moore

As adventurers in your science fiction role-playing campaign travel across their local galactic empire, they will walk the streets of a hundred different futuristic cities. The city is the focus of a nation's culture and society. It reflects its people and their customs, including their dreams, fears, vices, and strengths. Cities can make a powerful impression on the players in your campaign if they are properly described and played. But if you were to sit down right now and describe what makes any one futuristic city in your campaign unique, you'd probably have trouble doing it.

The problem lies in the number of cities. In the average science fiction role-playing game there are many, many more cities than there are inhabited worlds. Even a sparsely-populated planet could boast 100 cities, each with a population of over 50,000 and each with its own unique style. You won't have the time to flesh out every city in your universe on the off chance that the player characters will visit it. Fortunately, the PCs probably are not going to visit many cities other than those adjacent to starports or those penned into their adventures, so you do have some control over the situation.

Every world should have at least one major city worth exploring. But how can you go about creating a whole city out of nothing but your imagination, and still make that city exciting, believable, and easy to use?

Last issue's column dealt with the use of stereotypes, brainstorming, and novel material in creating "primitive" cultures for your campaign. You can do much the same for "advanced" cultures, too, though you use these tricks in slightly different ways.

Building Rome in a Day

Stereotypes are not always bad. For instance, most technologically advanced cities (at least those on Earth at present) have a certain sameness to them: skyscrapers, traffic-snarled streets, pollution and litter, police and fire departments, loads of people, and a certain concrete-and-glass look to everything. Flashing neon signs and yellow street lights take over at night, and the diamonds and rubies of car lights fill the streets. This particular stereotype of a "modern city" allows both you and your players to assume certain things about modern cities in general, which makes playing out an urban scenario easier. Even if the players do not specifically ask about it, they probably will assume each city has a hospital, a police force, local radio or TV stations, and so forth. Certain aspects of Nairobi, Indianapolis, London, and Beijing are alike—well, almost.

But if you are the game master of a science fiction game, the last thing you want is player boredom. Cities should be memorable places to visit. Who wants to land on a world that has cities exactly like those of the last planet you visited? As the GM, you're out to build memories for the players. Let's dispose

of the stereotyped "modern city" for now.

One basic procedure for making up a large group of cities, each slightly different from the others, follows. You don't have to start out worrying about the statistics of the city—population figures, area covered, most common trade items, etc. Instead, you must create an image for the city in question.

First, ask yourself: What's really interesting about this city—and I mean *really* interesting? Is there a real or fictional city that would serve as a model or inspiration for it? What do you want the PCs to remember about this place? Start brainstorming, writing down details as they come to mind. Focus on making this city stand out from all the rest.

Next comes some fleshing out and campaign detailing. How will this city fit into its planetary culture as a whole? (You should already know what sort of civilization the world in question has before you make up a city for it.) You want the city to reflect the world's technological level, morals, attitudes, weak points, and so on. This is very much a continuation of the first step, as you are still building an image, but you are now fine-tuning it to its setting. You probably will have to work out these two steps at the same time, going back and forth from one approach to the other as you develop a city that will have an impact on the PCs from the moment they set foot on the streets.

Let's try an example. You've got a world that is governed by a religious dictatorship, and you want to detail the most important city it has. But for some wild reason, you have this image of a Las Vegas-style metropolis set next to that world's main starport (first step). Ha! cries the rational part of your mind, that's illogical—unless, of course, that "city of sin" is also an independent nation, a go-between for the potentially hostile religious government that needs to sell produce on the interstellar market, and the profiteering starship captains who hate the government but make good money from the world's exports (second step). This city—let's be trite and call it Novatown—is ruled by a capitalistic family dynasty, the Cortezes, that acts like an aristocracy, a sort of "old rich" family with a tremendous amount of money, weapons, diplomatic skills, and interests both on and off the world. Maybe the family members are a cross between European barons and the characters on *Dallas* or *Dynasty* (back to first step). The family walks an increasingly thin line between the laws and tolerance of the world's King-Priest, the plots by starship captains, and their own attempts to maintain the family's wealth (back to second step).

Novatown now shows more than a glimmer of interest. It's big, rich, glitzy, and full of bright lights, shady deals, hot cash, and raw power. But right outside of the city's gates are the King-Priest's armed guards, who patrol to ensure that no taint from the city reaches the "purified" population of the rest of the world. There are many more guards than one would think necessary; perhaps someday the King-Priest will give the nod, and those armored personnel carriers and infantrymen will pour into the streets of Novatown to bring "justice" to its "sinners." However, the King-Priest isn't sure how tough the Cortez family's defenses are, and the loss of interstellar trade would be a disaster for the world's economy. The King-Priest simply bides his time and waits for an opening, for a weak spot in the Cortez family, for a sign from the heavens that his attack would gain the city's wealth in a lightning stroke. The Cortezes have thwarted the King-Priest's plans time and again. Will they do so forever?

To those bright city lights we've added paranoia, suspicion, espionage, and the threat of kidnappings, murder, bribery, war, and the struggle for the fate of a family, a city, and a world. Now make sure that when the PCs land on the world they get a chance to dive right into the thick of the mess—when creating the city's image, also start jotting down random notes on potential adventures. Nothing needs to be detailed yet, but the idea of having the PCs witness the kidnapping of Maria X. Cortez, a fiery young member of the Novatown aristocracy, is worth a note. And maybe the PCs will visit the all-night dance clubs and gambling casinos, picking up rumors of great wealth being offered for seeming simple spy missions—but who is offering the money, and what's really up? What if an agent of the King-Priest makes friends with a PC and has a look around the PC's starship, but he plants a bomb aboard to intimidate off-worlders and so the disaster can be blamed on the Cortez family? Things are rolling for your city now!

There is one tiny flaw in the setting, of course: Why can't the King-Priest just build his own starport and forget about Novatown? Why does the King-Priest have to deal with the Cortez family to sell his goods off planet? A lot of the tension in this setup is lost if the two sides do not have to deal with each other. Find a way to keep the rivalry strong. It guarantees many future adventures that way.

A second example: Ultima is a small, multinational world with many independent nations and cultures. On the day you start thinking about Ultima's major city, you heard a news report about the fighting in Beirut, Lebanon. Within moments, you begin writing down what little you know about Beirut as a potential model for the city of Ultima Prime, and perhaps you scan the newspapers or the library for more information (first step). The dominant images are of civil strife, urban warfare, and terrorism. The starport has escaped most of the destruction because it has been regarded as neutral territory—until now.

After more thought, you decide that the world of Ultima was settled by colonists from several long-established worlds (second step). It was intended to stand as an example of what interstellar cooperation could achieve. It ended as a nightmare of treachery, violence, and bigotry. The different colonial groups found the world's resources too limited to support them all, and rival interest groups fueled the fire by sending guns and aid to the different factions. Attempts to mediate the disputes ended when an outbreak of food poisoning spread through several of the armed camps. Fighting broke out almost immediately.

As in Beirut, Ultima Prime is now divided into several hostile areas, each patrolled by its own defense force (back to first step). Much of the city has been reduced to rubble by intense fighting that has lasted for more than two decades. Almost no starship captain will consider going to Ultima unless offered enormous prices, since there is no guarantee that a ship will not be attacked by any side. Military warlords rule from their bunkers, civilians scurry about the city on their daily routines, and every block has a fresh body from the previous night's snipers and firefights. The religious and political symbols and slogans of the world's factions decorate every remaining wall in Ultima Prime, most having lines of bullet holes and laser scars splashed across the paint. With no strong central government left on the world to control the factions, the

conflict has degenerated into a cross between a holy war and a blood feud between petty alliances of humans and aliens. Interestingly enough, in a bizarre show of equality, humans and aliens regard each other as equals, and no faction discriminates against anyone on the basis of species or sex (back to second step).

At the starport, the PCs, who probably have been paid a lot of cash to come here, land and find that their starship is taking small-arms and rocket fire (notes on potential adventures begin). If the PCs survive the landing, they could be forced to abandon the ship, running for cover across the crater-scarred starport landing zone. The hulks of blasted ships lie around the PCs, and the bones of unfortunate militiamen and starship crewmen are scattered everywhere. Maybe the PCs will stay and fight back until the guerrillas have been driven off. Maybe they will have to scavenge parts from ruined ships to repair the damage on their own ship so they can take off again. Maybe they will be forced to stop a terrorist attack or to aid an assault on one faction's stronghold. Maybe the PCs will try to take refugees off this hopeless world and deliver them to a better place elsewhere in the galaxy. Maybe they will face an army of terrorists and—sadly—be buried here.

With these two examples, you should get an idea of what you can do to create a memorable city. Build the image **first** and make it fit the world. A city should cry out with the promise of adventure, and the PCs should look forward to each landing with a cross between hope, dread, and excitement. Consider some of the following potential interstellar cities:

Dragonfly: This "flying city" is a giant space station patterned after the *Cities in Flight* novels of James Blish. The city's mayor is assisted by a self-aware computer, and Dragonfly's business is to sell its services from world to world any way it can. The solar system or star cluster where Dragonfly is located is deep in an economic depression; money talks, but money is rare. Dragonfly may often accept interstellar barter rather than cash to gain the resources it needs. The city's main business is to mine small asteroids and bring the refined metals into orbit around the purchasing world, which then uses the metals in orbital industries. Dragonfly's people have a hard-nosed attitude about work, and they'll do almost anything to make money and keep their city alive.

New Pacific: Did you ever see the movie *Soylent Green?* New Pacific is based on that movie's view of a futuristic New York City, where gross overpopulation produces food and water shortages, urban disorder, the collapse of law, and myriad other terrors. Only human foot traffic can pass through the congested streets, and squatters inhabit everything from cardboard shacks to skyscrapers. Murder is a minor crime; hoarding of food is a capital offense. The whole society hovers on the edge of disaster; plague and starvation break out constantly, no matter how many trips the PCs make to this world to bring much needed supplies of food-processing technology and medicine. But who would believe that the city's government itself is sponsoring—*cannibalism?*

South Katrina: Katrina, like Berlin after World War II, is a border city divided between two enormously powerful but hostile nations. The city appears to be exceptionally modern and clean, but military units patrol along the river that divides the city into North and South Katrina. South Katrina has the starport, but the nation controlling North Katrina is allowed by treaty to use the starport. Tension is very high, as the two superpowers have been at odds for half a century now, and relations between them have recently worsened. Espionage activity is intense, and border provocations and escape attempts across the river are common. Sometimes minor firefights occur, and everyone dreads the possibility that the fighting will escalate—in which case the city probably would cease to exist. Yet the PCs are drawn here, like so many others, for the industrial goods sold and shipped from this high-tech port. Perhaps they, too, shall be drawn into the web of intrigue that is woven throughout this busy, nervous metropolis.

Crater D10/706: Crater D10/706 is the official designation for a city that officially does not exist. An interstellar power called the Nebula Confederacy decided years ago to build a secret industrial park on an airless world in a little-known star system. The industrial park, which produces military equipment and weaponry, has been greatly expanded over the decades until it has more than a million people. Entire families have worked in the factories of "Dee-Ten" for generations now. The Confederacy forbids anyone but certain high-level government officials to leave the planet. Nonetheless, word about Dee-Ten is slowly leaking out through rumors and strange reports from starship crewmen who accidentally visited the system or heard too much from loose-tongued military personnel. Many of the people of Dee-Ten have grown tired of their working conditions and the tiresome military government. Civil unrest is spreading. The PCs might become involved in helping the citizens of Dee-Ten rebel and become independent. The Confederacy has grown weak over the years, and it is having trouble with many other pockets of dissent among its worlds; a major victory against the Confederacy's space fleet probably would seal Dee-Ten's independence. Though the background of Dee-Ten was drawn from my imagination, the situation does resemble that of some East European countries just before the democratic revolutions of 1989.

Urban Sprawl Expanded

The city-creation system outlined above is designed to set down the feel of a city before you set down anything else, such as the name of the local mayor. But once you have a city's personality, you can create more specific details: the city's location, general layout, population size, type of government, industries, starport location, transportation modes, private and mass communication systems, medical and educational (library) facilities, usual climate and weather, recreational parks and buildings, major ethnic groups and religions, customs, landmarks, etc. You can even add details on local holidays (the emperor's birthday), dress (kilts, togas), architectural style most often seen (pyramids, domes), major historical events (the big earthquake and fire a century ago), current events and news (and scandals), unusual laws (starship crews cannot wear red), important taxes and tariffs (ouch!), the cost of living (double ouch!), and the best night-life spots.

To spare your sanity, don't do this stuff all at once when you're first developing the city. Add it in as an adventure progresses, and keep your notes straight on the things you invent. After a game session, you can write up your notes more neatly and use them later on.

If this city will be visited in future adventures, you might want to make notes on the types of major crises or events that will be going on when the PCs next return. Will a war have broken out? Will taxes have risen? Will the

city be shrinking as its people move to better lands? Will it be election time? Only the game master knows for sure—most of the time (but he can wing it).

If a city is distinctive enough to warrant it, and if PCs will be spending a lot of time there, it also will be helpful to develop a simple random encounters table. Keep it vague at first, noting the chances for encountering police, unusual NPCs, interesting rumors or news, unusual sights or events (such as accidents and bad weather), and for becoming lost. You might add some more specific details over time, such as the size and armament of local police squads, or the chances of encountering fog in a riverside town. Take your time at it.

One important note: Under no circumstances should you feel that you have to map out any part of a city if it isn't relevant to an adventure. Your verbal descriptions alone will do more to bring the city to life than 150 sheets of graph paper covered in pen scribbles with every street and alley named. Who cares? A vague sketch of the city will serve well to hold particular details in mind so that certain landmarks don't start to wander around from adventure to adventure because you forgot where you placed them. Certain buildings might require some mapping if an adventure is based there, but don't carry it any further.

As time goes on, you will find that the city is taking on a life of its own, and it will develop a particular personality that may be a little different than you had once imagined. This is likely if the city is often seen in the campaign. The PCs may come to like or dread this place, and your game-mastering style may change to suit the territory. The players now—just a little bit—believe in the city you gave life. Give yourself a quick pat on the back. That's what being a good GM is all about.

Cities, Cities, Everywhere

Look at the following list of real-world cities, and think about the key elements that make each city distinctive. Don't worry about exaggerating a city's particular personality; exaggeration is perfectly fine as long as it brings out a style without becoming overdone or obnoxious. Take out a pencil and think about London, Warsaw, New York City, Rome, Leningrad, Shanghai, Honolulu, Tokyo, Manila, Pretoria, San Salvador, San Francisco, Taipei, Liverpool, Chicago, Kansas City, Hong Kong, Montreal, Gary, Pittsburg, Birmingham, Sidney, Rio de Janero, Dublin, Mexico City. If you have trouble picking out a particular city's personality, talk to someone who has visited that place, or thumb through a tour guidebook. Look for catchy, interesting, distinctive cities, ones that will grab and hold the PCs' interest.

Then stretch your mind a bit and think about some cities that don't really exist—but don't let that stop you from using them as models for cities in your own campaign: Gotham City (of Batman fame), Los Angeles (as seen in the movie *Bladerunner*), Metropolis (from the movie of the same name), Trantor (from Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series), post-nuclear Los Angeles (from *Warday* by Whitley Strieber and James Kunetka), Erhenrang (from *The Left Hand of Darkness,* by Ursula K. LeGuin), and Gitler, Missouri (from *A Torrent of Faces,* by James Blish and Norman L. Knight). Look through your collection of old science fiction novels and see what other surprises you can pull out for your campaign.

Given some brainstorming, careful fitting, a little logic (and a little il-logic), no two urban jungles need be alike anywhere in the galaxy. And they shouldn't be, as long as there are good GMs to build them. ❑

The Skorpio

This New Monster Is Tough In the Clinch

by Costa Valhouli

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Deserts
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Tribal
ACTIVITY CYCLE:	Any
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Low-average (4-8)
TREASURE:	0,P
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral evil
NO. APPEARING:	2-8
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	3
THAC0:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon/1-6
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Surprised only on a 1
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Standard
SIZE:	M (5-6′ tall)
XP VALUE:	175

Skorpio are a vicious breed of bipedal scorpions believed to have been created by a magical experiment. They have large, compound eyes, a tan to dark brown exo-skeleton, and very dextrous human-like hands.

Combat: Skorpio do not take time to develop battle plans, rushing blindly upon anything they come across. They attack with weapons recovered from previous victims, favoring spears and swords. Every three minutes they also can attack with their long, flexible tails. At the end of a skorpio's tail is a sharp, venemous stinger fed by two poison-producing glands. A tail attack is made with a +2 on the "to hit" roll. A victim hit by the stinger must save vs. poison or die in 2-5 rounds. The poison is a powerful neurotoxin, a successful save still results in 2d4 points of damage.

The skorpio's low Armor Class is due to its tough exoskeleton and exceptional dexterity.

Habitat/Society: Skorpios live in small clans in burrow-homes they construct under the sand. A few skorpios prefer to live in the crevasses of rock formations. Their treasure is kept in their homes along with 1-12 females, 3-6 young, and 1-4 eggs.

Ecology: Skorpio are carnivorous, eating animals and humanoids. They are especially fond of humans because of the treasure they yield. ❑

Character Adjustments

Unflatten Your Cardboard Characters

by Paul Jaquays

Does a character really *need* anything more than his basic statistics? Why bother personalizing a character? Why give him a history? Why load the character up with personal problems?

Answer: *Why do you think they call this role playing?* Role playing games are about characters and how they interact with their worlds, not just how well the players roll the dice.

"Flat" characters are still commonplace because many players rarely go beyond generating statistics. Warriors are mere fighting machines, wizards provide heavy artillery, thieves act as mobile lock picks, and elves just have pointy ears. Despite the variety of skills often used in creating science fiction characters, similar problems blur and flatten them as well.

Enhancing roleplaying is what character development is all about. Instead of just appearing out of nowhere, a well-rounded character has a life, family, friends, enemies, and "memories" of things that have gone before.

Character development gives a character a personal history filled with events, large and small. Saying your character picked up his weapon and survival skills while fighting as a rebel in a recent war and survived a terrible plague only to be marked with distinctive scarring certainly packs a lot more punch than just classing him as a level one warrior with a lousy appearance. By working with the Game Master, the player can make adjustments and fit his "new" character into the game world as if he or she always had been an integral part of the game world's history.

Character development establishes a place for the character in society. It's great for a character to be civilized and have money; but is it really worth the hassle of guarding the family jewels, practicing the tiresome rules of behavior and etiquette expected from members of the nobility, or even having to use silverware at the table? But pity the poor character who has no family honor to defend, no siblings to rescue, or no old family friends to hit up for a free meal now and then.

Proper character development includes exploration of the character's personality. Decide what kind of behavior the character will exhibit. How about an honest thief who sneezes when he handles magic? Or a space explorer who discovers her allergies to the synthetic linings of spacesuits? While quirky things like unreasoning fears or outlandish behavior are fun, it's just as important to decide on basic traits like honesty and integrity.

Of course, not everyone has the wherewithal to create fresh, exciting, fictional characters out of thin air. For those lucky enough not to be cursed with the writer's bug, there is now concrete help. Task Force Games' Central Casting game aid series provides simple, yet detailed avenues to help players flesh out their characters.

During the infancy of adventure gaming, some publishers assumed that no one would want pre-generated adventures—they were an insult to gamers' presumed creativity. Apparently the same presumption continued regarding character development—that, and snobbery about randomization and dice tables.

Central Casting presumes that players and game masters (and maybe a few aspiring authors) *do* want help creating detailed characters. The game aids also presume that players and Game Masters don't mind rolling a few dice.

The Central Casting books are generic background creators for role playing game characters. *Heroes of Legend* creates backgrounds for characters in fantasy role playing games. *Heroes for Tomorrow* does the same for science fiction characters. A third book, dealing with contemporary period games is in the works.

Easy-to-follow instructions take players and game masters through an intricately interlinked series of dice tables which are used to generate character backgrounds, cultural information, family, special events, talents, skills, and personality. Throughout each book role playing suggestions point out ways that characters' special features could effect game play. Finally, there are conversion notes to help the gamer custom fit a history to most popular—and a few obscure—game systems.

Central Casting For GURPS

During the development of Central Casting: *Heroes of Legend*, I neglected to include conversion notes for the GURPS game. GURPS players, this is for you:

The GURPS game is classed as a Skill Level (0-20 + Range system). To get the best conversion, double the Central Casting skill Rank and add 3 to obtain a corresponding skill level for the GURPS game.

Central Casting And Skill Buying

In game systems, such as GURPS, where the creation of balanced characters is based on spending a fixed number of points to acquire a character's attributes and skills, try the following:

One. Select character attributes as normal. Spend no more than 50% of the character's purchase points on them. Reserve the rest for character development.

Two. Roll up a background, making special note of modifications to the character's attributes or "flaws" that may give the character additional points.

Three. Compare the details of the character history against the game system's costs for skills, social standing, physical and character benefits or flaws. Add and subtract points from the remaining purchase points as indicated by the costs of the abilities or flaws gained from the history.

Four. If the character's expenditure of points exceeds his allowable purchase points, trim back the skill ranks of some skills to lower, less costly levels.

Five. If the character ends up with additional points to spend, due to character flaws or unspent points, purchase skills in keeping with the general flavor of the character's background. Choose skills that logically complement existing skills.

Central Casting: Heroes of Legend and Central Casting: Heroes for Tomorrow are available from Task Force Games. ❑

The ABCs Of Acronyms

Filling Out the Initials in Superhero and Spy Games

by Rob Nicholls

Game Master: "Okay, just as you open the safe, a half dozen BLADE agents swarm into the room, guns blazing."

Player: "What does BLADE stand for?"

Game Master: "Uh . . . um . . . you have no idea. Yeah, that's it, no idea."

(Combat takes place wherein all of the enemy agents are subdued.)

Persistent Player: "I'm going to ask one of these guys what BLADE stands for."

Game Master: (rolling dice to make it look good) "The agent says, "Forget it, I ain't telling you anything!"

Annoying Player: "Okay then, I'll just use some truth serum (and/or mental powers) to find out."

Desperate Game Master: (quickly rolling dice) "Oops, it looks like the agent has bitten down on a hidden poison capsule. You'll get nothing out of him."

Really Annoying Player: "You did that on purpose! I bet you just don't know what it stands for and don't want to admit it!"

Annoyed Game Master: "Oh yeah? Well, maybe and maybe not. Anyway, you don't have time to worry about it."

Annoying Player: "Yeah? Why not?"

Smiling Game Master: "Because 50 more agents in assault armor are coming through the walls."

Part of the fun in running a campaign for espionage or superhero games is using the exotically-named organizations. ORION and WEB of the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, and many others are ingenious acronyms for elaborate organizations.

However, coming up with a good acronym is not always easy. Usually a Game Master will come up with the acronym first and then struggle to find the proper words to fit it. To help ease that struggle, here is a game aid, a list of words that might fill the gaps in your acronyms. Do you have all the words for HAMMER except for the A and the M? Just look at the proper sections of the list and see if anything sparks your interest. This is not a complete list of possible words, but it contains many useful words that can help you come up with others. For example, the word judicial is on the list. If it is close to, but not exactly what you are looking for, just check out any dictionary or thesaurus for similar words. In this case, you'll find the words judge, judgment, judicature, judiciary, and judicious all close by.

Don't forget prepositions such as and, of, and the. These can be used in the name of the organization, yet do not necessarily have to be included in the acronym. For example, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is called the FBI, and not the FBOI.

Also remember that more than the first letter of a word may be used in the acronym. An example of this would be NORAD, which stands for NORth American Defense.

Using this guide, the next time that annoying player asks what BLADE stands for, quickly rattle off "Brotherhood of Lawlessness, Anarchy, and DEfiance." No doubt he will be so stunned by your quick and impressive response, he won't even notice the agents coming up behind his character.

Acronym Word Listings

Abandon, Able, Abnormal, Abolition, Abominable, Accord, Acerbic, Acid, Activities, Administration, Advanced, Advocate, Aerospace, Agency, Aid, Air, Alliance, Alternate, Anarchy, Angry, Annihilation, Armageddon, Armament, Armor, Army, Artful, Artificial, Assassins, Assembly, Association, Authority, Auxiliary

Balance, Ballistics, Basic, Battalion, Battle, Base, Beasts, Beggar, Believers, Berserk, Best, Bestial, Betray, Better, Best, Bewitch, Beyond, Big, Biological, Bionic, Biowarfare, Block, Bloom, Brigade, Brotherhood, Bureau

Cabal, Calamity, Carnage, Cartel, Catastrophe, Cats, Central, Chaos, Chemical, Chief, Civil, Clandestine, Classified, Coalition, Cold, Combat, Combine, Command, Committee, Company, Confederacy, Corps, Council, Counter-Espionage, Counter-Intelligence, Covert, Criminal, Cure, Cute, Cybernetic.

Day, Damage, Danger, Daring, Dark, Dastardly, Death, Decadent, Decay, Decent, Deception, Decimation, Defense, Defiance, Delvers, Demolition, Department, Destruction, Devastation, Development, Disarry, Disaster, Diseased, Discord, Discrimination, Disembodied, Disfunction, Disgrace, Disorder, Division, Doctrine, Dolts, Dominion, Double-Dealing, Draconian, Dragons, Dreadful, Dutiful, Dynamic

East, Educated, Efficient, Effluent, Elite, Employment, Energy, Enforcement, Enterprise, Environmental, Espionage, Ethics, Evil, Execution, Experimental, Expert, Exploration, External, Extortion, Extreme

Face, Facility, Faction, Federal, Federation, Fellowship, Firearms, First, Fistful, Force, Foreign, Foundation, Fraternity, Fraud, Freedom, Front, Functional

Gadfly, Gaelic, Gala, Galaxy, Gale, General, Genetic, Genocide, Geological, Geothermal, Global, Good, Government, Grade, Group, Guard, Guild

Habitual, Hack, Hags, Hairy, Hand, Happenings, Hate, Havoc, Hazard, Headquarters, Headway, Healthy, Heat, Hectic, Help, Hermit, Heroism, Homicide, Honor, Horror, Hour, Huge, Humans, Humble, Humiliators, Husky, Hybrids, Hydro, Hyper, Hysterical

Idea, Ideal, Ill-gotten, Illuminati, Independent, Individual, Industrial, Initiative, Inquest, Installation, Institute, Insurgence, Intelligence, Internal, International, Intimidation, Investigation, Irascible, Irish, Irreverant, Italian, Ivy League

Jackal, Jail, Jacquerie, Japanese, Jape, Jeopardy, Jerks, Jihad, Jingo, Jinx, Job, Joint, Judicial, Junior, Junta, Jurisdiction, Justice, Juvenile

Kendo, Key, Kids, Killing, Kin, Kindness, Kinetic, King, Knaves, Knight, Knowledge, Kung Fu

Labor, Ladies, Laotian, Large, Last, Law, League, Legal, Legion, Liberation, Life, Limit, Lodge, Loose, Love, Lowly, Loyalty

Machine, Magical, Major, Malice, Manslaughter, Marine, Martial, Master, Mechanics, Medical, Mega, Menace, Mental, Metropolitian, Military, Minute, Month, Movement, Murder, Mutant, Mutual, Mysterious, Myth

National, Natural, Naval, Nazi, Necromancy, Nemesis, Network, Neutral, New, Nexus, Nocturnal, Normal, North, Nonmutant, Nuclear, Nuts

Object, Observation, Office, Official, Olympic, Omni, Onslaught, Operation, Order, Ordinance, Organization, Orphans, Outreach

Pack, Paradox, Parahuman, Paranormal, Paratrooper, Partisan, Party, Patient, Peace, People, Perfect, Philosophy, Physical, Police, Political, Potential, Power, Prison, Private, Professional, Protection, Public, Punishment, Pure, Pyrotechnics

Quadrant, Quality, Quantity, Quarter, Quasar, Quash, Queer, Quest, Questionable, Quick, Quirk, Quorum

Rabid, Radar, Radical, Radioactive, Rampaging, Rebellion, Reconnaissance, Reform, Regiment, Region, Regulatory, Religious, Republic, Research, Resistance, Resource, Response, Retaliation, Retribution, Revolutionary, Right, Robbers, Rogue, Roman, Runaway

Sabotage, Sad, Saints, Scare, Scheming, Scientific, Scotch, Scouts, Sea, Second, Secret, Section, Security, Service, Sisterhood, Situation, Slime, Society, Source, South, Space, Special, Squad, Staff, State, Stellar, Strange, Strategic, Strikeforce, Subterfuge, Superhuman, Support, Supreme, Surveillance, Syndicate, System

Tactical, Taskforce, Team, Telepathic, Terrorist, Testing, Thermonuclear, Thinker, Think Tank, Threat, Time, Top, Toxic, Trade, Training, Tragic, Travel, Treaty, True

Ultra, Unconventional, Undead, Underdog, Union, Unit, United, Universal, Unknown, Unnatural, Unstoppable, Unusual, Utilitarian, Utopia

Valkyries, Vandalism, Vanguard, Venom, Veteran, Vicious, Victory, Vigilance, Vigilante, Vile, Villainous, Vindicate, Violence, Volatile, Voluntary, Vulgar, Vultures

Wanton, Ward, Warfare, Waste, Water, Weapons, Week, Weird, West, Wisdom, Work, World, Wrecker, Wretched, Wrong-doer, Wyrm, Wyvern

Xanadu, Xanthic, Xeno

Yankees, Year, Yellow, Yeomen, Yield, Yogi, Yorkshire, Youth, Yule

Zeal, Zephyr, Zesty, Zodiac, Zone, Zoological ❑

A Magical Contest

May The Best Enchanted Items Win

Many DMs and players of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game can't seem to get enough new magic items. And we here at HQ like to run such magic items in the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine from time to time. However, since we have very few magic items in the files to print, we thought it was time to come up with a contest to help fill those files.

The Rules

Each entry must be typed, double spaced. Computer printouts are acceptable if the printing can be easily read. Include your name, address, and membership number in the upper right hand corner of the first page.

Each entry (a magic item description) should not exceed one page. Further, each entry should be on its own page. In other words, if you come up with three magic items with short descriptions, make sure each one is on a separate page.

Each entry must be for the AD&D® game.

Each entry must be complete. This means you must include the name of the magic item, a description of it, the number of charges if applicable, and an explanation of its function and how to use the item. Include an experience point value for each item.

Enter as many times as you like. Submit entries for any or all of the categories.

All entries will be treated as submissions to the Newszine.

The Categories

Apparel. This includes any items a character might wear except jewelry and armor. For example, apparel could be cloaks, capes, boots, shirts, pants, belts, hats, etc.

Jewelry/Adornments. This covers rings, bracelets, clasps, and other magical ornamentations.

Consumables. This category includes potions, scrolls, foodstuffs, and other items that are consumed when they release a magical effect.

Equipment. This covers practically anything not in the above categories: weapons, armor, gear, etc.

The Prizes

Grand Prize is an AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook* autographed by several of the people involved with the project; a one-year subscription to DRAGON® Magazine, and a one year renewal to the RPGA Network.

First Prize is a one-year subscription to DRAGON® Magazine and a one-year renewal to the RPGA™ Network. **Second Prize** is a one-year subscription to DUNGEON® Magazine and a one-year renewal to the RPGA Network. And **Third Prize** is a one-year renewal to the RPGA Network.

The Deadline

All entries must be postmarked by June 30, 1990. The winners will be announced in a future issue of the POLYHEDRON Newszine. The best entries will be published in the Newszine. ❑

The Living City

The Ice House

by Fran Hart

Any city as large as Ravens Bluff offers more to its residents and visitors than tailors, armorers, and taverns. Ravens Bluff is a city of versatility and rich variety and is home to a number of specialty shops that can be found nowhere else in the Forgotten Realms.

One such business is the Ice House, located on the fringes of the wealthier business district and situated above a series of underground caverns. The Ice House is a profitable venture, supplying ice to many noble households, elite inns, and private clubs. Where else could all those chilled goblets of wine come from?

The current proprietor of the Ice House is Mage Darra Winn, who inherited the business from her wealthy parents. Darra is from a family of wizards. She put an adventuring past behind her when she settled down to marry and raise a family.

Her dearly beloved husband was a sober, intelligent mage. Unfortunately, he died five years ago from the plague, leaving Darra alone to run the Ice House and raise her three daughters, Jenna, Cara, and Sherra, ages 6, 8, and 9, respectively.

All three girls are brown-haired, blue-eyed replicas of their mother, which leads some to believe that Darra was indeed the victim of the old folklorish Mother's Curse: "I hope you have lots of children, and they grow up to be just like you!"

Darra Winn

7th Level Female Human Wizard

STR: 14
INT: 17
WIS: 16
DEX: 14
CON: 11
CHA: 17
COM: 13
AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 21
Alignment: Neutral Good
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Sling
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Knowledge of Ice Formation (17), Dowsing (17), Swimming (14)
Languages: Common, Frost Giant, Dwarvish
Spells/Day: 4 3 2 1
Magic Items: Robe with a permanent *deep pockets* spell on it, *decanter of endless water, boots of the north, ring of flying, wand of ice storms* (45 charges)

Spell Books

Level One Spells:

Cantrip	*Chill Touch*
Enlarge	*Feather Fall*
Light	*Magic Missile*
Shield	*Tenser's Floating Disc*

Level Two Spells

ESP	*Glitterdust*
Levitate	*Locate Object*
Shatter	*Web*

Level Three Spells

Clairaudience	*Clairvoyance*
Fly	*Gust of Wind*
Slow	*Tongues*

Level Four Spells

Ice Storm	*Wall of Ice*

Darra is 5'7", has a muscular physique, weighs 160 pounds, has blue eyes, and wears her brown hair in coiled braids atop her head. She is brisk, energetic, has a whimsical sense of humor, and an appealing, infectious laugh. Dara is a smart, fair businesswoman who tends to mother anyone she knows well. Darra habitually wears her scarlet robe with permanent *deep pockets*. She inherited her *boots* from her mother, and acquired her other items during her adventuring career, much of which was spent in cold-weather climes tracking down frost giants.

Darra is a shrewd businesswoman and uses her spells each day to create and store ice for the Ice House. However, most of the ice she sells is cut during the winter and stored deep in the caverns below the house, packed compactly and insulated with sawdust. She uses the spell *shatter* to create chipped ice. The mother of three feisty young daughters, Darra finds that the spell *locate object* comes in handy.

She prizes her magic items and would be extremely upset if anything happened to them. However, her most prized possessions are her daughters. She values any life above possessions.

Darra has heard rumors all her life that secret entrances connect the caverns beneath the Ice House to catacombs and thieves' hideouts underneath the city of Ravens Bluff. But she dismisses the entire concept as so much moonshine. Neither she nor her parents ever have had any trouble or seen any proof of the existence of such passageways.

The Ice House

The Ice House is a large building built over cool underground storage caverns that with the help of sawdust and Darra's spells, keep the ice in good condition. The building has been painted dark blue inside and white outside.

A small shack outside the main storehouse sells flavored, shaved ice in returnable earthenware cups during the hotter months in Ravens Bluff. Darra creates the flavored ice with a *cantrip*. The treat costs two coppers, and there is a three copper deposit on the earthenware cups and spoons. Darra's three young daughters handle this aspect of the business.

Darra has been known to provide free flavored shaved ice for special occasions to local orphanages. Youngsters often can be found hanging around the Ice House, offering to wash the cups and spoons in exchange for a free treat.

The Ice House always has blocks of ice of any desired size and sacks of chipped ice available for sale. Six-pound sacks of chipped ice cost five gold pieces, and ice blocks cost one gold piece a pound. Darra has contracts with many of the wealthier families and elite establishments in town and delivers ice to their doors each morning. She contracts with a local cooper to make casks insulated with sawdust to help keep the ice frozen. The casks are also sold at the Ice House for five gold pieces each.

The Ice House is staffed during the day by Darra and her two teenage helpers, Ivo Durstan and Allston Salk. Ivo and Allston are orphans who sleep in

the shack in front of the house. Both are strong and had their share of street fighting experiences in their younger days. Darra mothers them and makes sure they are well fed and warm. Ivo and Allston are loyal to Darra and grateful to her for having employment and a roof over their heads.

Darra doesn't worry much about security for the Ice House. She always can make more ice, and ice is not an easy commodity to fence if stolen.

Ivo Durston

2nd Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 16
INT: 12
WIS: 13
DEX: 14
CON: 18
CHA: 14
COM: 10
AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 12
Alignment: Neutral Good (Lawful tendencies)
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Club, Sling, Unarmed Combat
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Working With Ice (12)
Languages: Common

Ivo is a black-haired, green-eyed, strong looking 17-year-old, who at 6'1" and 165 pounds has not yet stopped growing. He looks stronger and older than his years. Ivo was orphaned at the age of eight, and he kept himself alive and fed by his wits, speed, and willingness to work menial jobs. He wandered into Ravens Bluff at the age of 14 and was fortunate that the first place he looked for work was the Ice House. He looked strong, but skinny, dirty, and ill fed. Darra decided to give him a chance, and took the opportunity to clean him up and fill him up. The struggle over his first bath in three years was monumental, but the enticing smell of two hot apple pies and a roast chicken beside the bathtub was more than he could resist.

Since Ivo came under Darra's wing, he has grown six inches and gained 50 pounds, all of it muscle acquired by wrestling with the ice. During his wandering youth, he acquired street fighting skills and a wary suspicion of strangers. Ivo speaks little, but listens intently and has learned to be courteous to customers no matter how rude or demanding they may be. He gets along well with Allston and often feels protective of the slighter youth.

Darra has shown him affection and trust. The girls are fond of him, and he treats them with humor and gentleness. Ivo would die for Darra or her daughters if need be.

Allston Salk

2nd Level Male Half Elf Thief

STR: 13
INT: 16
WIS: 15
DEX: 17
CON: 13
CHA: 16
COM: 16
AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 9
Alignment: Neutral (some Good tendencies)
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Sling, Ice Pick (treat as dagger)
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Alertness (16), Fast-Talking
Languages: Common, Elvish

Thief Skills:

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
50	35	20	45	40	20	70	—

Slim, red-haired, green-eyed Allston stands 5'6" and weighs 127 pounds. He looks about 14, but believes himself to be older, just late in developing. Allston believes himself to be human and has no idea of his half elf ancestry. His earliest memory involves a stern-faced woman wrapping a few copper pieces in a dirty rag and thrusting it at him. The woman turned and walked swiftly away, becoming lost in a noisy, rapidly moving crowd. Since then, the towns and faces have been just blurs to Allston; snatches in memory of songs learned, voices heard while hiding, or food stolen while running with gangs of other dirty, unkempt children.

He came to Ravens Bluff two years ago, riding in the back of a cart of wool where he had hidden to get away from a city guard who just wouldn't listen to his explanation of why he hadn't paid for a loaf of bread.

Allston is quick, charming, and glib. He usually is able to talk his way out of trouble and sometimes trades on the fact that he looks younger than he is. Thievery was the way he lived, and he feels no remorse. He is relieved that he no longer has to steal to survive. However, he does love the sparkle and shine of jewelery and gems, and would undoubtedly be a gaudy dresser if he had the funds.

Allston also loves flavored, shaved ice and met Darra while hanging around the Ice House scrounging for coppers to buy the delicious treat. He convinced Darra that he would be a good worker and a good salesman, and so far he has proven his worth. Darra turns a blind eye to the copious amounts of shaved ice that Allston eats, since it has never done him any harm and he never seems to gain weight from indulging in the treat.

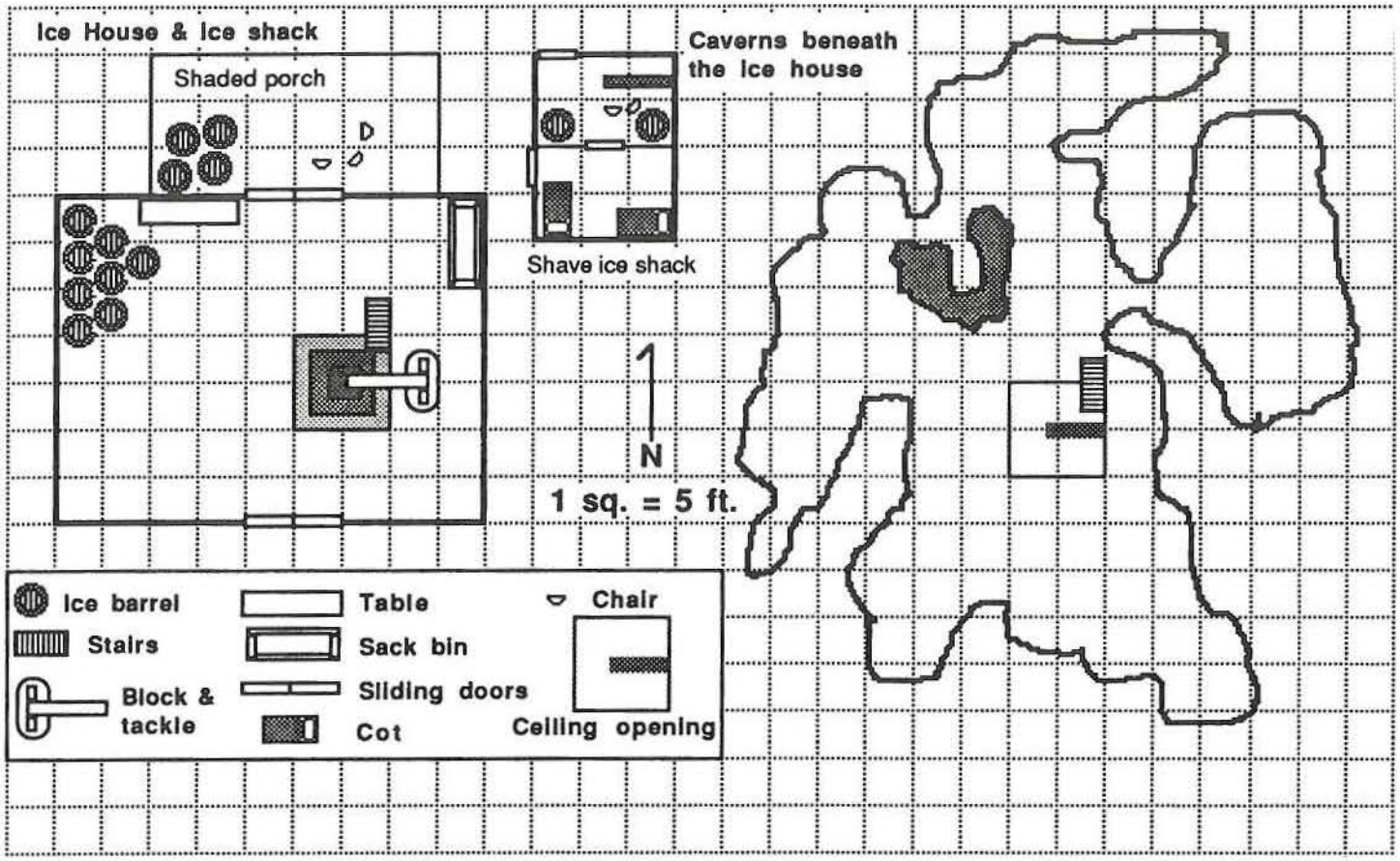
Allston enjoys working with ice, skillfully learning to use the ice picks to separate larger pieces of ice into manageable blocks. He loves the glitter and sparkle of the ice and is delighted when Darra creates colored ice by the use of a *cantrip.* He is a quick learner and is adept at throwing the ice picks to hit targets.

This is the longest Allston can ever remember remaining in one place. He is loyal to Darra and her daughters and looks upon them as his family. He is very protective of the girls. He likes Ivo and thinks that they make a good team. Ivo provides the muscle and Allston provides the mouth.

Allston hopes that someday, after he has proven himself to Darra, she will teach him magic and he will become one of the most respected wizards in the world.

Allston currently has a problem that he has not yet decided how to handle. Recently, a member of a thieves guild approached him with an offer of membership if he will let the guild store items in the underground caverns beneath the Ice House. While Allston has no desire to do this, he doesn't want to make enemies for himself or problems for the Ice House. Darra should be told, but she's been so good to him that he'd like to spare her the worry and take care of this problem himself. If he could just figure out a plan or get some help from local adventurers.

Characters who visit the Ice House may be intrigued by the novelty, recruited to help resolve Allston's problem, mothered by Darra, or they may just enjoy the frozen concoction that is sold. The Ice House would be the perfect place to store anything that needs to be kept cool. ❑



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Dreadbot

Continued from page 17

Mounted in the Dreadbot's chest is a weapon cluster consisting of a laser cannon that does a base damage of 30 at a base range of 250 meters, two fusion rifles each with a base range of 125 meters, and two grenade launchers with base ranges of 90 meters, each loaded with 5d10 grenades of various types.

The Dreadbot also can punch, kick, or stomp with its hydraulic limbs. A pilot makes an attack with one or more limbs at his Attack Rank modified by his Skill Level. The base damage for a punch is 25 points, and for a kick, 35 points. Characters hit by a punch or kick suffer the effects of a Slam Attack (see rule book, page 28). The base damage for a stomp is 45 points (Intensity 90) and causes effects similar to a Crushing Weight Attack (rule book, page 25). A damaged Dreadbot falling on someone has a base damage of 90 points.

The Dreadbot is protected by a double-strength energy screen (−2RF). The internal circuitry is shielded from energy-dampening fields of Death Machines. However, the Dreadbot still suffers damage if its energy screen comes into contact with the dampening field.

The Dreadbot's other systems include two searchlights, which cast light up to three scale inches; a loudspeaker; and a communications sender. A Code V ID is necessary to gain access to the cockpit of any WARDEN. The cockpit can be sealed airtight with the activation of its internal oxygen supply (120 hours for two crewmen, 240 for one). This supply can be replenished at a rate of one hour of oxygen for every two hours the cockpit is unsealed. In case of an emergency, the cockpit hatch can be blown and the crew seats ejected from the Dreadbot's head.

Most Dreadbots are equipped with self-destruct mechanisms which cause the nuclear engine to explode five minutes after activation. The mechanism can be deactivated any time during the first four minutes, but once past that mark the system is committed. A self-destruct explosion destroys the Dreadbot, anyone and anything in it, and causes effects equivalent to a Dirty Fission Bomb (see rules supplement, page 10 and POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #48, page 20).

The State Of The Dreadbot

GMs should remember that Dreadbots, like any other artifacts, are not likely to be found intact. The introduction of a crippled Dreadbot can be the start of an adventursome campaign as characters strive to repair and understand it. Possible problems include empty weapon launchers and a missing or damaged limb. If GMs are using the thought disk method for characters becoming familiar with the Dreadbot, perhaps only one or two of the disks are inside and they must search for the other information. Dreadbots are nearly as rare as Defense Borgs. ❑

Rats! The going got rough for member Ed Peterson during the Grand Masters event.

Blowing it off TSR Inc.'s Mark Olson refused to take the proceedings seriously.

BLOODMOOSE™
and Company
©1989 GARY M. WILLIAMS
...SNIFF...
...SOB...
HEH, HEH, HEH...
OH BOY!! I SURE HOPE I GET THIS RIGHT.....
YARRGGHH!
KER-BLAM
HUMM.... NOT BAD!
GOT 'IM IN ONE SHOT!!
SIGH..... MY HERO!!
AWW....
AND AS MY HERO YOU GET AS A REWARD A....
KISS!
AWK!! UNCA ERIC! MR. SHADOWHOG! HALP!!!
YEEAGH!
ZRACK!
LUCKY WE CAME IN WHEN WE DID!
LUCKY THEM UNDAID CRITTERS AIN'T AS TUFF AS THAY LOOKED!
LOOKIT ALL THET GOLD! I WUZ A'GINNIN' T' THANK WE'D NIVER SEE A SCRAP O' IT!!!
OH I KNEW WE WOULD, UNCA ERIC! I HAD FAITH IN THAT AGE OLD PROPHESY THAT MAMA TOLD ME!
AGE OL' PROFUHCEE? WHUT TH' HAILYEW TAWKIN' 'BOUT THAR BOY?!?
YOU KNOW... ABOUT HOW A GHOUL AND HIS MONEY ARE SOON PARTED!
YEW COME BACK HVAR YEW LITTLE....
BLOODMOOSE! NO!!
MAMA!
THE END
GARY M. Williams

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Vote for the GAMERS' CHOICE™ Awards of 1990

The RPGA™ Network, a worldwide organization of gamers known for its continuing support of excellence in gaming, takes pride in sponsoring the 1990 GAMERS' CHOICE™ Awards.

If you enjoy playing games of any kind here is your chance to make a difference. Participate in this year's voting for the best games of 1990. This is your opportunity to let the game and toy manufacturers know what you think about their products. These awards are the voice of you—the consumer.

The RPGA Network reserves the right to disqualify any ballot that fails to meet balloting rules. The RPGA Network will present the awards during its National Meeting August 10, 1990, at the GEN CON® 23 Game Fair in Milwaukee, WI.

You may vote for one product in each category. You need not vote in all categories. Only *NEW* products or *MAJOR REVISIONS* of existing products (excluding magazines, which are considered separately) published during 1989 are eligible for the 1990 GAMER'S CHOICE Awards. Reprints and re-releases *do not* qualify unless the product has undergone a major revision. If you are not sure whether a product qualifies, check the copyright date printed on the product. A 1989 copyright date is not a guarantee of eligibility, but it is a good indication.

Products that were awarded 1989 GAMERS' CHOICE Awards are not eligible for election to the 1989 Awards, with the exception of magazines. These include:

Best Family Game	MERTWIG'S MAZE™ TSR, Inc.
Best Fantasy Role Playing Game	Gurps, Third Edition Steve Jackson Games
Best Science Fiction Role Playing Game	Cyberpunk R. Talsorian Games
Best Other Category Role Playing Game	BULLWINKLE AND ROCKY TSR, Inc.
Best Role-Playing Adventure	Castle Greyhawk TSR, Inc.
Best Role-Playing Accessory	Lords of Darkness TSR, Inc.
Best Historical Strategy Game	THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER TSR, Inc.
Best Science Fiction Strategy Game	BUCK ROGERS TSR, Inc.
Best Miniature Line	AD&D® Game Series Ral Partha Enterprises
Best Computer Game	Pool of Radiance SSI, Inc.
Best Play-By-Mail Game	Heroic Fantasy Flying Buffalo, Inc.
Best Professional Gaming Magazine	POLYHEDRON™ Newszine TSR, Inc.
Best RPGA Network Tournament	Scrap of Paper by Skip Williams and Jean Rabe

Please indicate on your ballot the name of the manufacturer of each product you vote for. The manufacturer's name is not required to validate the ballot, but it will prove helpful in the tallying.

Balloting Rules: Please Read Carefully

1. If a ballot violates any of these rules, it will be disqualified.
2. You must use this ballot or a photocopy of this ballot.
3. Your name and address must appear on the ballot.
4. You may only vote once! If if you send more than one ballot, all your ballots will be disqualified.
5. VOTE for ONE (1) product in each category. You may not add new categories, but your comments will be considered for next year's balloting.

CATEGORIES:

1. **Best Family Game:** This may include any mass market board, dice, card, video, or abstract strategy game.
2. **Role Playing Games & Accessories:** This category has been been subdivided by genre: (Solitaire gaming books also may be considered in their appropriate theme.)
   Fantasy: This genre includes games in which magical or mythological creatures and worlds predominate. Awards in this genre have been further subdivided into game rules, playing aids & rule supplements, and role playing adventures.
   Science Fiction: This genre includes science fiction futuristic themes including time travel, outer space, future worlds, aliens & mutants, etc.
   Others: This genre includes games that do not fall under the above categories, including high adventure, espionage, pulp heroes, superheroes, and humorous themes.
3. **Hobby Games:** This includes strategic battle and diplomacy games. This can include wargames, card games, and other types of games not included in another category. A subcategory of hobby games includes Miniature Figures used by strategy gaming enthusiasts or by role-playing gamers.
4. **Computer Games:** This includes gaming software specifically designed for home computers. There are two awards, one for adventure games including computerized role-playing games, strategic games (which includes computer versions of hobby games), and simulator programs such as airplane flight. The second award is for play-by-mail computer assisted games in which turns are processed through the mail.
5. **Gaming Magazines:** To qualify, a gaming magazine must have a subscription base in excess of 1,000 copies.
6. **RPGA Network Tournament:** This category includes single-and multi-round tournaments for a variety of role-playing game systems that were run at conventions during 1989.

Official Ballot: GAMERS' CHOICE™ AWARDS of 1990

Mail ballot by June 30, 1990 to: GAMERS' CHOICE™ AWARDS, RPGA™ Headquarters, P.O.Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147
Please Print Your Vote:

1. Best Family Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

2. Best Fantasy Role Playing Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

3. Best Fantasy Adventure
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

4. Best Fantasy Accessory/Supplement
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

5. Best Science Fiction Role Playing Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

6. Best Other Category Role Playing Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

7. Best Historical Strategy Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

8. Best Science Fiction/Fantasy Strategy Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

9. Best Miniature Line
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

10. Best Computer Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

11. Best Play-By-Mail Game
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

12. Best Professional Gaming Magazine
Product: _____
Manufacturer: _____

13. Best RPGA Network Tournament
Tournament: _____
Author: _____

The following information is required to validate your ballot:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____

Final Ballot for the

Origins Awards 1989

Presented by the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design

1. Best Historical Figure Series, 1989
__American Civil War, 15 mm, Stone Mountain Miniatures, Inc.
__American Civil War, 25 mm, Connoisseur, USA.
__Aztecs, 25 mm, Falcon Miniatures
__Republican Romans, 15 mm, Frontier Miniatures
__Seven Years War, Hungarians & Russians, 25 mm, RSM Ltd.

2. Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Figure Series, 1989
__Dragonlance AD&D Figures, Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.
__Fantasy Adventurers, Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.
__Official AD&D Monsters, Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.
__Ork Horde, Warhammer 40K, Games Workshop, Inc.
__Shadowrunners, Shadowrun, Grenadier Models, Inc.
__Skeleton Army, Games Workshop, Inc.
__Star Wars Series, Grenadier Models, Inc.

3. Best Vehicular Miniatures Series, 1989
__Battle Titans, Games Workshop, Inc.
__BattleTech Mechs and Vehicles, Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.
__Dwarf War Machine, Games Workshop, Inc.
__Harpoon Miniatures, GHQ
__Renegade Legion: Centurion Line, FASA Corp.

4. Best Accessory Figure Series, 1989
__Cities of Mystery, TSR, Inc.
__Colonial Guns and Machine Guns, 25 mm, Lyzard's Grin
__Hovels, Medieval and Northern European Buildings, Stone Mountain Miniatures, Inc.
__Warhammer Mighty Fortress, Games Workshop, Inc.

5. Best Miniatures Rules, 1989
__BattleSystem Miniatures Rules, TSR, Inc.
__Napoleon's Battles, The Avalon Hill Game Company, Inc.
__Soldier's Companion, Space:1889, Game Designers' Workshop, Inc.
__Tactica, Arty Conliffe
__Warhammer 40K Compendium, Games Workshop, Inc.

6. Best Role-Playing Rules, 1989
__AD & D -2nd Edition, TSR, Inc.
__Champions (hardback), Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc.
__Ghostbusters II, West End Games, Inc.
__Shadowrun, FASA Corp.
__Space:1889, Game Designers' Workshop, Inc.

7. Best Role-Playing Adventure, 1989
__Alice Through the Mirrorshades, Paranoia, West End Games, Inc.
__Curse of the Azure Bonds, Forgotten Realms, TSR, Inc.
__Empire of the Witch-king, Middle-earth Roleplaying, Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc.
__The Great Old Ones, Chaosium, Inc.
__The Ice Man Returneth, Paranoia, West End Games, Inc.
__In Search of Dragons, Dragonlance, TSR, Inc.
__Waterdeep, Forgotten Realms, TSR, Inc.

8. Best Role-Playing Supplement, 1989
__Creatures of the Dreamlands, Call of Cthulhu, Chaosium, Inc.
__Imperial Sourcebook, Star Wars, West End Games, Inc.
__Monstrous Compendium, AD&D 2nd Ed., TSR, Inc.
__Shadow World: Master Atlas, Rolemaster & Fantasy Hero, Iron Crown Enterprises, Inc.
__Spelljammer, AD&D, TSR, Inc.

9. Best Graphic Presentation of a Role-Playing Game, Adventure or Supplement, 1989
__AD & D -2nd Edition, TSR, Inc
__Creatures of the Dreamlands, Call of Cthulhu, Chaosium Inc.
__Imperial Sourcebook, Star Wars, West End Games, Inc
__Lace & Steel, The Australian Games Group
__Shadowrun, FASA Corp
__Spelljammer, AD&D, TSR, Inc.

10. Best Pre-20th Century Boardgame, 1989
__A House Divided, Game Designers' Workshop, Inc.
__Guns of Cedar Creek, Simulation Design Inc.
__Napoleon at Leipzig, Clash of Arms Games, Inc.
__Rise and Fall, Engelman Military Simulations
__Siege of Jerusalem, The Avalon Hill Game Company Inc.

11. Best Modern Day Boardgame, 1989
__5th Fleet, Victory Games, Inc
__Desert Steel, West End Games, Inc.
__Europe Aflame, TSR/SPI.
__Modern Naval Battles, 3W
__Red Storm Rising, TSR, Inc.

12. Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Boardgame, 1989
__Battle for Endor, West End Games, Inc
__Dungeon!, TSR, Inc.
__The Great Khan Game, TSR, Inc.
__Space Hulk, Games Workshop, Inc.
__Web of Gold, TSR, Inc.

13. Best Graphic Presentation of a Boardgame, 1989
__5th Fleet, Victory Games, Inc.
__Battle for Endor, West End Games, Inc
__Red Storm Rising, TSR, Inc.
__Space Hulk, Games Workshop, Inc.
__Web of Gold, TSR, Inc.

14. Best Play-By-Mail Game, 1989
__Family Wars, Andon Games
__Illuminati, Flying Buffalo, Inc.
__It's A Crime, Adventures by Mail
__Kings & Things, Andon Games
__Mobius I, Flying Buffalo, Inc.

15. Best New Play-By-Mail Game, 1989
__Beyond the Stellar Empire-The New System, Adventures by Mail
__Orion Nebula, Orpheus Publishing Corp
__Space Combat, Twin Engine Gaming
__Supremacy, Andon Games

16. Best Fantasy or Science Fiction Computer Game, 1989
__Curse of the Azure Bonds, Strategic Simulations, Inc.
__Dragon Wars, Interplay Productions
__MechWarrior, Activision
__Sword of the Samurai, Microprose, Inc.
__War of the Lance, Strategic Simulations, Inc.

17. Best Military or Strategy Computer Game, 1989
__Battles of Napoleon, Strategic Simulations, Inc.
__F-15 Strike Eagle II, Microprose, Inc.
__M-1 Tank Platoon, Microprose Software, Inc.
__Sim City, Maxis
__Their Finest Hour, Lucasfilm

18. Best Professional Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1989
__Challenge, Game Designers' Workshop, Inc.
__Computer Gaming World, Golden Empire Publications
__Dungeon Magazine, TSR, Inc.
__GM, Croftwood, Publishing
__Strategy & Tactics, 3W
__White Wolf, White Wolf Publishing

19. Best Amateur Adventure Gaming Magazine, 1989
__The Canadian Wargamers Journal, The Canadian Wargamers Group
__ETO, Bill Stone
__Savage & Soldier, Lynn Bodin
__Volunteers, The Newsletter of Civil War Gaming
__The Zouave, ACW Society

Signature: _____

Address: _____

These are the final nominees for the Origins Awards for 1989. Vote for only one nominee per category by checking or marking the line preceding your choice. Fill in your address and sign your ballot. Mail the completed ballot to: Origins Awards Final Ballot, PO Box 3727, Hayward, CA 94544.

The deadline for return of the ballot is June 8, 1990. Ballots postmarked after the deadline will not be counted. The Origins Awards will be presented at Origins '90 in Atlanta, June 28-July 1, 1989. The awards ceremony will be Friday, June 29th. Members of the Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design will receive a final ballot in the mail. If you have any questions concerning the ballot or the Academy, please write: Origins Awards, PO Box 3727, Hayward, CA 94544.